LOOK BEFORE YOU SHOOT

by Woodman

The SHOOTING TIMES

and Country Magazine

Incorporating FIELD SPORTS

SEVENTY-SIXTH YEAR | FRIDAY, JULY 11th, 1958 | 1s. 3d. WEEKLY

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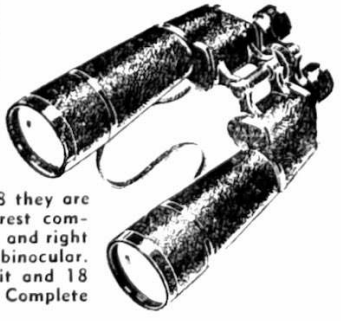

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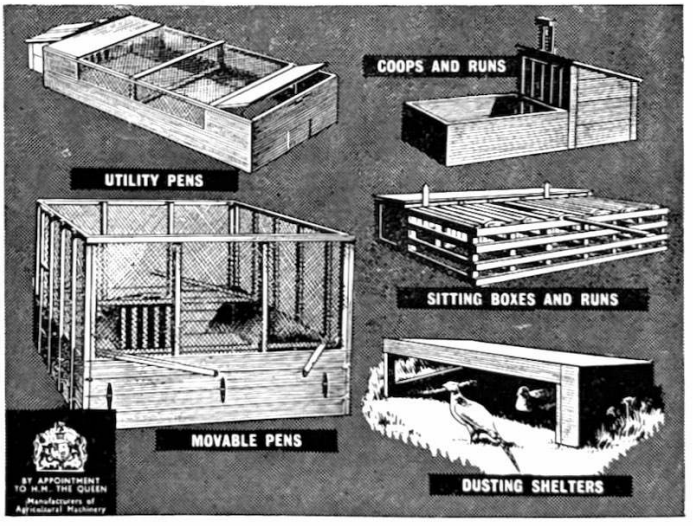

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Making Introductions

ALTHOUGH we have in this country a sporting tradition second to none, our opportunities for shooting, compared with those enjoyed by sportsmen in many foreign lands are relatively restricted. That is to say, the species of birds and beasts that form our quarry are few in number, and having regard to the continually increasing dangers which these now face from progressive and destructive science, a further reduction is a reasonable fear for the future.

We are fortunate in that we enjoy a longer shooting season than many countries. This is because conservation has always been practised to a sensible degree, and perhaps never more so than at the present time. If we can maintain and build up "recognised" game and resident wildfowl stocks we shall be largely content, but the possibility of increasing the variety of sporting birds is one that often occurs to shooting men, and especially to those who have sampled other types of shooting in different countries. Might it not be practicable and profitable, they wonder, to introduce such birds as jungle fowl, wild turkeys and guinea fowl into their coverts, and eventually to establish a wild stock of these alien fowl throughout the country.

There is no doubt that the introduction of foreign species, although for a time apparently successful, can have a boomerang effect with disastrous repercussions. Reference to angling in this connection was made recently on this page when the introduction of American bass into home waters was cited. Another case in point that resulted in destructive failure was that of pike-perch. With regard to shooting, no game preserver needs reminding of the consequences that followed the original importation of the grey squirrel and the little owl, and farmers have for nigh on two thousand years cursed the captain of the Roman galley which carried the first rabbits to these shores.

On the other hand, there would seem to be a good case for experimenting further with new introductions, carefully selected, especially in the light of modern, scientific conservation. Some have been tried in the past; jungle fowl in the New Forest, guinea fowl on a number of private estates, even wild turkeys in some districts, with only a modicum of temporary success. Might it not be worth making another attempt? It is not suggested that the establishment of a new wild stock is a short term policy. It would take time and countrywide co-operation. But it might work, in the same way as the building up and distribution of Canada goose stocks promises to work. Originally the grouse was the only game bird indigenous to this country. Now it is one of several. A start had to be made with the others somewhere. Would it be worth attempting to increase the variety of sporting birds by seeking to establish some species that flourish in other countries with similar climates and conditions?

We throw the debate open to the house with the added thought that it might, after all, be more profitable to expend our efforts on an all out attempt to persuade the authorities to relax the dubious regulations which prevent the importation of Hungarian partridge eggs to rescue our native stock from its perilous position.

THE SHOOTING TIMES AND COUNTRY MAGAZINE
Incorporating FIELD SPORTS
Official Organ of THE WILDFOWLERS' ASSOCIATION OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND

No. 3957 FRIDAY, JULY 11, 1958 Founded 1882

The wild life of today is not ours to dispose of as we please. We have it in trust, We must account for it to those who come after.—King George VI.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

Liege Re-Visited

The fifth session of the International Commission on the Proof of Arms took place in Liege from Monday, June 9, until Friday, June 13. There were 23 delegates present, representing Austria, Belgium, France, Germany and Italy, with the Birmingham Proof Master attending as an observer. The Spanish delegates sent apologies for inability to attend. The conference was under the President of the C.I.P., General Chevalier of Belgium, with Colonel Van Geyseghem, the Proof Master at Liege, as its secretary. Amongst matters the conference had under review were:

Consideration of the reports of two sub-commissions; (1) on the adoption of a suitable pressure barrel for international use in the recording of pressures in rifled arms, and (2) on the adoption of internationally agreed chamber diameters and dimensions for shotguns. Other matters on the agenda included the standardisation of proof loads and methods and the approval of the Rules of Proof of the Paris Proof House.

The next conference is to be held in Italy either in June or October, 1959, under the Presidency of the Italian delegate, Signor Sebastiano Poli, Proof Master at Gardone Val Trompia near Brescia.

During the week one day was spent at the Fabrique Nationale arms factory at Herstal, where in the school of engraving 90 engravers are to be seen working in one room. One other day was spent at the Brussels International Exhibition.

Win a Mammoth's Molar

A fossilised mammoth's molar, which is at least 10,000 years old (and probably dates back 100,000 years) is the top prize, and surely the most unusual one ever, in an angling contest now being organised by Britain's sand and gravel pit owners.

The tooth, one of the four which completed a mammoth's set, was found in the mud on the South Bank of the Thames during excavation work on the building of a wharf for a sand and gravel company. About eight inches high, seven inches wide, and two inches thick, it has been set in an ebonised mount, and will be presented to the angler who catches the largest specimen fish in a gravel pit.

The tooth will be a perpetual trophy, retained by the winner for one year only. With it, however, the Sand and Gravel Association of Great Britain—sponsors of the contest—will award an annual top prize of £20 and ten subsidiary prizes of £5.

The contest will close next March at the end of the current coarse fishing season.

The now extinct mammoth, was the "grandfather" of the elephant. About nine feet high at the shoulders, it had a high domed head, strongly curved tusks, and a thick coat of shaggy reddish-brown hair.

The last specimen probably existed in Britain about 10,000 years ago — although it had existed for about 250,000 years before it was finally wiped out during the last great Ice Age. Remains have been found throughout Europe, northern Asia and America. It had only four teeth — all molars, so there must be another three potential prizes lying about somewhere on the South Bank.

Another Blackbird on the Range

Since my note about the blackbird which nested and successfully raised a brood on the I.C.I. cartridge testing range, I have heard of another example of devotion to duty under fire. "Kidderminster Katie" is the Kidderminster Gun Club's pet blackbird which built a nest on four piles of clays left by one of the traps.

Although she obviously could not stand the whirr of the trap blade, she stuck grimly to the business of incubation and in due course hatched out three chicks. These in turn had to live within a few inches of the trap blade and some two thousand cartridges were fired while they were getting their feathers.

At last they left the nest safely, a good omen for this newly formed clay pigeon shooting club, in the opinion of its members.

Stolen Rifle

Stolen, in transit between Esher station, Surrey, and Birmingham, one .22in. Hornet Mauser sporting rifle, No. 9636, fitted with telescopic sight and sling.

Information to the nearest police station, or Parker-Hale, Ltd., Birmingham 4, please.

Starting Young—or Old

"There will also be a novice class with a magnum of whisky for the winner." From a clay pigeon shoot announcement.

AUCEPS.

The Seat of Justice

by Tower-Bird

WHEN I wrote, last week, about the swivel shooting-stool which my good friend "Judge" Johnson had invented so that wildfowlers could shoot in greater comfort from the bottom, or shelf of a mud-gutter without getting their pants wet and themselves in a sinking, shocking mess. I had no intention of mentioning the subject again until I had tried the seat out in its official capacity, as it were. Judge had long promised to make me one of these stools, and it was delivered to me in person when we met at the Golden Jubilee Dinner of W.A.G.B.I. at Sittingbourne.

When I got it home, I sat on it, examined it, thought it looked a bit awkward, sat on it again, and then used it for hand-weeding and suchlike back-bending gardening jobs. Then, last night, I took it out with me on a non-serious pigeon shooting foray. This operation took place amid tall, matted grass and bramble cover on top of a hill overlooking a bit of ground planted with cabbage and brussel-plants and which the pigeon were stripping.

Coming out of a sunken place into the open, I surprised a pigeon sitting on a low branch of a line of elms and killed it as it clattered out. Then another came round the corner of the elms, hurriedly but low, and this, too, fell. I re-loaded and stood perfectly still, and, within seconds, a pigeon topped the elms and came to grief. I saw no others for two hours. Each of the pigeon shot was, more or less, a "sitter": I mean to say that anyone could have shot them.

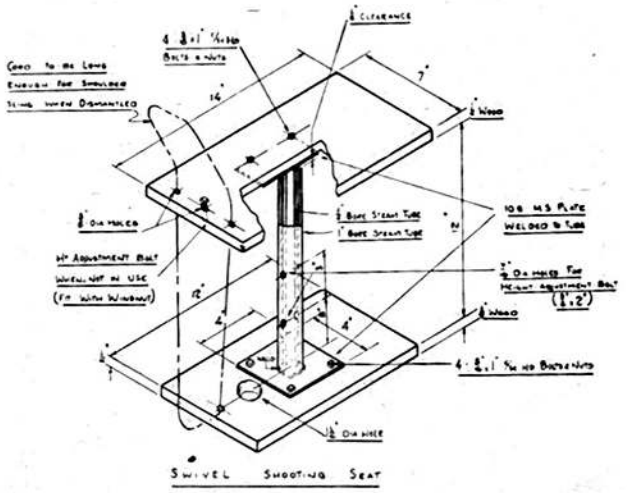
But how I pitied Don, who was already panting in the heat, for all the birds fell among dense nettles and brambles and a mass of grass and thistles. One pigeon was not far in, but the heat and dust would have been trying enough for a young dog. The second bird took nearly a quarter of an hour to bring to hand, and I fancy it had lodged high up among the brambles. Don, his face plastered in grass-seed, emerged at last, very, very slowly with his bird, and then flopped down panting like a steam-engine. I let him rest for ten minutes and then encouraged him to have a go at the third, but after a half-hearted push at the punishing cover, he smilingly refused to make an effort. Later, on our way home, he went gaily into this tangled mass of torture and found his bird.

Well Down Out of Sight

Now, the reason why I am mentioning the seat of Justice again this week is because that evening I sat on it for nearly three hours and became more and more impressed with it. Hitherto, I had not given it undue thought, waiting for the late summer to see how it behaved in coastal mud. I had said nothing to its inventor about mentioning it in my articles, and he will be most surprised to read what I am writing, for he, himself, contributed a short article about it in the issue for April 12, 1957. Moreover this seat is not on the market, and if anyone wants one, he will have to make it. I think I need not say very much more about it, beyond the descriptive-in-action sense which follows, except that I shall take it with me on most pigeon and fowling forays in future.

Having two birds in the hand and one in the bush, I waded out through over-waist-high grass to the centre of a clearing surrounded by trees, the clearing being about a couple of acres. I have sat here many times on the ground, trying, by much neck-twisting, to watch the tree-tops on four sides at the same time, for odd pigeon come over from any direction, except when they are feeding in one spot and their line of flight takes them directly over the hill.

This evening, I sat Don on my game-bag, for the meadow-bottom was soaking after the heavy showers of the day, and then plonked myself down on the stool, drawing up my knees and laying the gun across them. In this position, my own seat was about eleven inches from the ground, and only my hat showed above the top of the gently-waving grasses. Don, as usual, was facing the reverse way to myself, so that, by watching him out of the corner of my eye, I could tell if any pigeon were approaching in the rear. In the past, when such has happened, it has been necessary to stretch cramped limbs and to turn, or half-turn in a great though slow scramble.



Bird-Dog In Action

I had been sitting only a minute or so when the dog told me of a bird approaching, and at once I swivelled round as one would on a piano stool, and with next to no "foot-work," other than a gentle movement of the feet, I swung round and was in a perfect position to shoot. Unfortunately, although able to tell duck from gulls and pigeon from rooks, my good "bird-dog" has yet to learn the difference between a ring-dove and a turtle-dove, and this one happened to belong to the latter species.

An hour and then another hour passed, during which I swivelled now and again just for the pleasure of the feel of it, and the unusual delight of being able suddenly and smoothly to face the rear. I heard a pigeon or two cooing in the distance, and the crooning of a pair of turtle-doves. A cuckoo flew into an oak and sang with its broken tune. A nightingale jugged away in a chalk-pit close at hand, and a dozen and more other species joined in the evening chorus while their mates were sitting hard on eggs, or busy feeding their young.

Presently I rose to give my legs a stretch, and, as I stood upright, a pigeon shot over the trees in front of me, came straight towards me and was missed with a barrel in front and badly missed with a second behind. For two hours I had been longing to get a shot from my swivel seat, and, at the precise moment of leaving it for the first time, a pigeon came along, to be badly bungled, although a child of twelve might have shot it with a .410. I walked a yard or two, turned, walked back and took to the seat again.

Torment by Insects

By now the warmth of a rapidly-sinking sun was filtering through a gap low down in the elms, and torment by flies and midges increased. Don kept up a regular and exasperating *snap-snap-snap*, and for the next twenty minutes we cursed all flying and creeping insects, and I tied a knot in my handkerchief to remind me to get some anti-midge and put it in my game-bag for use by us both. Came a high-pitched *yak-yak* from behind, and, in a moment I was facing a crossing jackdaw. There was no stiffness or hesitation in my swing on the swivel stool. I shot and the 'daw crumbled.

I had one more shot before packing-up and that was at a pigeon coming straight at me from behind. I swung round with a gentle ease that would not catch even the eyes of a pigeon and swng inwards, "pulling" as I blacked-out the target. The bird died immediately.

Now, as I wrote last season, you are going to miss many oncoming and overhead birds, be they duck or pigeon, if you are sitting down to shoot. Stand up and you swing with them. Remain at squat, and your swing becomes cramped and stilted: or I suppose it does—anyway, you miss many easy shots. On this seat you can swivel with ease, so that you can follow through just as easily as if you were standing—more easily, I believe. But what, I had been asking myself, happens, if a bird comes directly at one, passing overhead if not killed out in front with the first barrel (I refer to birds over 60 feet up); one cannot swivel backwards and forwards, only round and round?

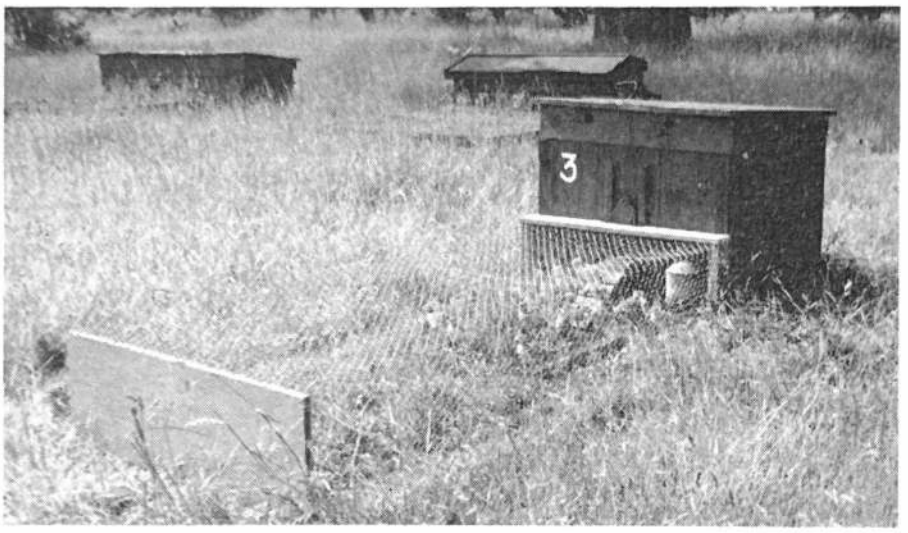
Having shot the pigeon, I attempted to analyse what exactly did happen to the shooter under the circumstances, and I came to the conclusion (hardly a fair one, perhaps, after a single shot and kill) that one was, in fact, able to swing through an oncoming bird, and for this reason: the stool, having a broad seat to sit on and a broad base to prevent it sinking unduly into the mud, and being short and compact, becomes almost part of the shooter. Not only can he swivel with it, but he can *rock* (and rock widely) on it without any risk at all of becoming unhorsed. Being able to rock and swivel at the same time, he finds that he can not only swing with and through crossing and partly-crossing birds, but with and through oncoming and overhead ones.

As a fowler and rough shooter, I consider this seat of Justice one of the best and most revoultionary pieces of gear that has come my way in the shooting line for many years.

* * *

No doubt due to the strange assortment of weather we have had this spring, the moles have been behaving in an unusual manner. On the allotments where I have a plot, they have been working far, far down, and one would expect some of the results of their tunneling to reach the surface. But hardly a molehill has appeared; yet, when sticking the peas, the sticks suddenly sink into mole runs, and here and there one comes across open mole holes, with no heap, where the moles have emerged, and even sat outside in the morning dew.

The Kennett System of Rearing Pheasants



Some experimental brooders.

THIS system has evolved from experiments carried out at Kennett, near Newmarket. It is a simple system whereby large numbers of pheasants can be reared with the minimum of labour, less time, and far more economically.

The main principles consist of hatching eggs in an incubator, or buying day-old chicks, rearing the chicks in a small space of ground in brooders, and turning the birds down to covert in the same brooders.

Many experiments of hatching eggs in incubators have been carried out with rather indifferent results; mainly, I think, because of incorrect heat in the incubators. We have found here that, following a procedure similar to that of the hen pheasant whilst incubating, that the heat should rise as the incubation progresses; *i.e.* the eggs should be turned as normal twice a day. The temperature should remain at 102 degrees F. for the first week, rising to 103 degrees for the remainder of the time until the chicks have pipped the shell. The temperature should then be raised to 104 degrees F.

After hatching, the chicks, when dry, are placed in an outdoor brooder. The brooders are either paraffin or Calor gas. The temperature of the brooder should be 95 degrees F. for the first week, and lowered ten degrees the succeeding week, and left running between 75 and 80 degrees F. the remainder of the time.

The one piece of equipment used to rear 100 chicks costs approximately £15, as compared with the normal five coops and five runs needed to rear them, costing approximately £37 10s. 0d.

Here are a few comparisons of food and working economy:

to rear 500 birds to 6 weeks	Old System	Kennett System
Pheasant Food	38 0 0	38 0 0
Food for 38 hens 12 weeks at 1/- per week	22 16 0	– – –
Paraffin for incubators & brooders	– – –	3 0 0
Cost of 38 hens at 7/-	13 6 0	– – –
25 food and water troughs	6 13 7	– – –
5 food and water troughs	– – –	1 7 6
Time at 3/- per hr. for feeding watering and taking off hens for 24 days	3 12 0	– – –
Time cooling eggs in incubator	– – –	1 4 0
Moving 25 coops and runs feeding and watering 2 hrs.	12 15 0	– – –
Moving 5 brooders and feed, water, 25 mins.	– – –	1 6
	£97 2 7	£43 13 0
To start from scratch		
Cost of coops and runs	187 10 0	– – –
Cost of nest boxes	20 0 0	– – –
Cost of incubator	– – –	20 0 0
Cost of 5 Brooders and runs	– – –	75 0 0
	207 10 0	95 0 0
Total costs	£304 12 0	£137 10 0

The following are a few benefits derived through using the Kennet system:

1. Economical. As explained previously.

2. Negligible mortality. The normal run of disease and parasites that attack your chicks are non-existent. Constant temperatures keep the chicks comfortable without bunching. The usual orgy of beaned and trodden chicks is completely eliminated and the curse of wet seasons, congestion, is non-existant through the circulation of warm dry air in the brooders.

3. Vermin proof. It is an impossibility for vermin of any kind to penetrate the brooder; consequently, the keeper who rears this way can sleep peacefully in his bed *every* night. There is nothing more discouraging for a keeper to find, on letting his chicks out first thing in the morning, a carnage of chicks where a rat or stoat has scratched its way in under the coop.

4. Mobility. The brooder having a stout base is easily movable either on the field or to covert. One man can easily move it on the field with less trouble than one coop without a base. The usual leg catching and toe trapping does not occur as the brooder, complete with chicks, is moved first thing in the morning before the chicks have had access to the run. Where the larger brooder holding up to 500 chicks is used two men can do this job in a few minutes as compared with the hours of moving 25 coops and runs.

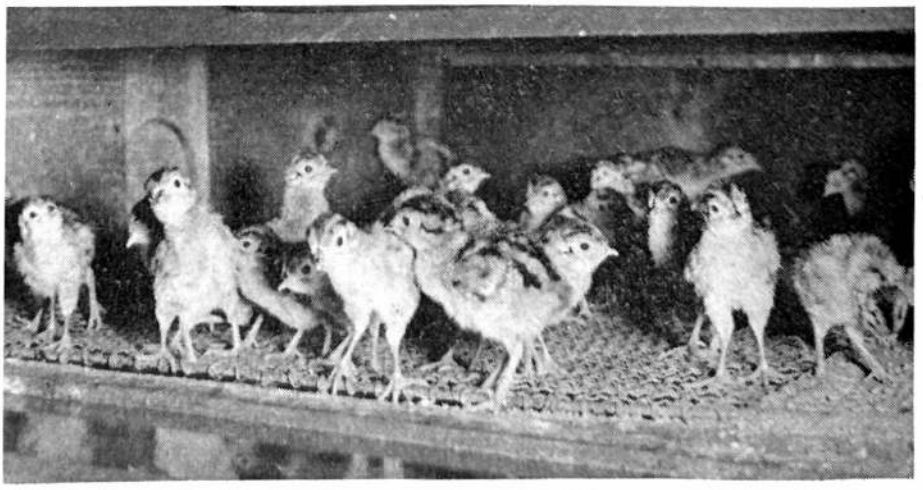
5. Shutting up for the night. Compare the difference of creeping up behind a coop with the coop front in ones hand, with chicks flying in every direction and the easy turn of a handle at the brooder side.

6. Turning down poults. When the birds have been moved complete with brooder and run to covert, they should be fed as normal in the run for the first two days. Six to a dozen birds should then be released, and feeding continued outside and in the run. The following day more birds may be released until the run itself is pulled six inches away from the brooder. Each day the run may be moved a further six inches until it is completely out of the way. Continued feeding of the birds in front of the brooders will ensure that the birds will not stray. In fact they will return each night and either perch on the top of the brooder or go inside. One keeper friend who has had 40 years' experience behind him, suggests we should leave the brooders out until the end of the shooting season. To put it in his own words, "Them boxes are old hens to the chicks, and where them boxes stay the chicks will." We shall certainly try that this year.

Brooder birds 23 days old.

The one failing we have found with these brooder birds is that they become as tame as chickens, and flock in from the fields on hearing the keeper's whistle. Or is this a failing?

On the whole the efficiency and economical value of the brooder outweighs anything that has so far been devised to rear either wild duck or pheasants. Next year we may try partridges . . .?



Dried off and ready for the field.

Look Before You Shoot

A Warning to Pigeon Shooters

by Woodman

THE word "pigeon" to most countrymen immediately brings to mind the woodpigeon, the despoiler of the farmer's crops. However, there are other kinds, such as carrier or homing, fantail and other ornamental types. These are tame birds being kept in dovecotes or pigeon lofts. In olden times such birds provided a source of food, and most large country houses had a dovecote, the birds being treated much the same as the fowls of the farmyard.

These type of birds are not *ferae naturae*, and so long as they have an *animus revertendi* — that is mind to come home to roost—the law regards them as it does other domestic animals. A person can have property in such birds even when they are flying beyond the confines of his estate. (Hamps *v.* Darby, 1948).

Thus it is just as wrong to kill such a bird as it would be another man's wandering dog. It is no defence to say that one thought it was a woodpigeon, and that if it had been realised it was not one would never have lifted a gun against it. In the case of Horton *v.* Gwynne in 1921 the defendant had shot a pigeon which had been sitting in a field about 40 yards away. He had honestly thought it was a wild one. He was convicted of an offence under Section 23 of the Larceny Act 1861. Mr. Justice Darling (as he then was) remarked in his judgment: ". . . His act was both unlawful and wilful. It was not accidental. It was not as if he had shot at a crow and killed a pigeon unintentionally. The pigeon was not his property and was not in fact a wild one . . ." That case had differed from an earlier one in 1863, Taylor *v.* Newman, in that the court had there been satisfied that the fatal shot had been fired by the farmer in defence of his crops, and as the bird had been left on the ground the farmer had not acted maliciously.

Persistent Crop-Raiders

Suppose tame pigeons persist in feeding on a farmer's crops; what can he do about it? In the case of Hamps *v.* Darby (1948) the plaintiff owned racing pigeons which settled on the defendant's crop of peas and damaged them. The defendant walked towards these raiders waving his hands, but they merely took off and settled in another corner of the field. He then promptly fetched a gun and shot four of them dead and wounded a fifth. He fired no shot first to scare them. The court held, (i) the plaintiff had property in his pigeons though they were not at the time of the shooting actually on his land; (ii) on the facts of the case there was evidence to show that the defendant had not satisfied the court that he had tried other means of getting rid of the birds before he shot them, and had therefore not discharged the onus of proof of justifying his action, which had been laid upon him by the rule in Creswell *v.* Sir, 1944. (See *The Shooting Times*, February 18, 1955). The court noticed that the birds were easily distinguishable from wild ones, and on the evidence it would have appeared that the defendant had not sufficiently considered whether any other practical method of protecting his crops was open to him.

What other means were open to him, one might ask. Well, there are such things as "bangers" and other bird scaring devices. They might or might not have been effective, that was not the point however; the point of the matter was, had the defendant considered or tried any less drastic course before resorting to killing the birds? That is the test in which the court found the defendant had failed.

Mere apprehension that pigeons may do damage to crops is not enough to justify killing tame birds. The damage must be done or being done. (Cotteril *v.* Penn, 1936).

In other words, the law in this matter is much the same as in the case of shooting a dog chasing livestock. The test which the defendant has to satisfy the court on is, briefly—was the killing the only practical way to prevent the damage, and to put a stop to it then and there, and was it, having regard to all the circumstances, really necessary? It is up to the slayer to justify his action. Each case must be considered on its own merits.

It must be remembered, however, that this defence can only be raised when a man is protecting *property*, whether it be crops or livestock; game, unless in captivity, is not property. The shooting of a trespassing dog in pursuit of a hare or rabbit cannot be justified. (Gott *v.* Measures, 1948).

A bag of 70—all fair game.

What about the pigeon which has become feral, the bird that no longer returns to its loft but goes its own way with its truly wild brethren? That case is similar to the domestic cat which, shunning human company, forsakes the comfort of the hearth and takes to a wild life in the woods. It becomes an outlaw and its former owner has no longer any power over it. In any particular case whether a once tame pigeon has become feral or not is a question of fact, whether it has no longer an *animus revertendi* depends on the evidence.

Evidence of Belonging

If a pigeon carries a ring on its leg, and from its appearance is clearly a fancy bird and not a wild one, then that is some evidence that it belongs to someone or other; not conclusive evidence of course. Likewise absence of a ring on such a bird does not necessarily prove that it has become feral. There is no obligation on a man to ring his tame birds.

The maxim for pigeon shooters, therefore, is: "It is better to be sure than sorry." Do not shoot until you are certain about the identity of the target.

So much for pigeons, but what about swans and herons, which often damage fisheries? As regards swans, which are in a category by themselves, their peculiar status was examined in an article in *The Shooting Times* of October 6, 1957. They are a bird royal, and although a private person can have a mark of swans (such as have the Vintners and Dyers Companies), they can be claimed by the Sovereign when they are upon open waters. Moreover all swans are protected birds under the Protection of Birds Act 1954.

The Protected Heron

Herons, which fishermen aver have a voracious appetite for small fry, are also protected. What can the owner of a trout farm, stew pond, or the bailiff of a trout stream do if his fishery is being depleted through the attentions of herons? If he kills herons, or for that matter mute swans, and is subsequently charged with the killing under the Protection of Birds Act 1954, he may be able to avail himself of the defence provided in Section IV (2) (a). He may justify the killing if he can satisfy the court that it was *necessary* to prevent *serious* damage to his fishery. The implications of the words in this section were noticed in *The Shooting Times* dated February 10, 1956. The point to remember is that the onus of justification is on the defendant, and he has to fully discharge it. In deciding whether he has or not, some court one day may pay regard to the standard which the High Court laid down in Hamps *v.* Darby ten years ago. Note well that this defence is not available in the case of killing Bewick or whooper swans or any bird in Schedule I of the Act.

A man has no property in herons in a heronry upon his ground for they are birds *ferae naturae*, for though they may return to their heronry he can in no wise hinder their comings and goings. It is likewise in the case of rooks in a rookery. (Hannam *v.* Mockett, 1824). Hawks, other than sparrowhawks, are protected under the Act of 1954. Apart from this a man has property in his trained falcons and the law regards them as it does tame pigeons.

Is it necessary to mention kingfishers? They are of course protected, but surely no fisherman, be he ever such a fanatic, would grudge this bright little ornament of the stream a few small fishes? After all, the pleasure in field sports lies by no means only in the excitement of the chase.

Clay Pigeon Shooting Fixtures

(Reports and Results appear on page 567)

July 10-19: National Rifle Association's 89th Annual Imperial Meeting, Bisley Camp, Brookwood, Surrey. Daily C.P.S. events and practice.
July 11: Childrey C.P.S.C. Club Shoot, Little Coxwell, 6 p.m.
July 12: Hayfield Gun Club, Open Shoot, 2 p.m.
July 12: Lancashire Skeet Championship, Blackpool G.C.
July 12: Leigh and District G.C. Club Shoot, 3 p.m., Windy Bank Farm, Glazebury.
July 12: Bisley G.C., Brookwood, Surrey. Open "Continental" Event.
July 12: Somerset Skeet Championship and Open event, Taunton & District G.C.
July 12: Leicestershire Skeet Championship and Open event, Leicester & District G.C., Blaby, 1 p.m.
July 12: Wetherby & District G.C., Yorks. Members' Shoot.
July 13: Parkstone R. & S.C., Hamworthy, Dorset. Club Shoot, 10 a.m.
July 13: Reigate and District C.P.S.C. Open Shoot. Driven Grouse, 40 Skeet, 50 D.T.L. Clay Hall Farm, 10.30 a.m.
July 16: Cavendish G.C., 6.30 p.m.
July 17: Waltham Abbey G.C., Essex. Practice 4 p.m.
July 18: Parkstone R. & S.C., Hamworthy, Dorset. Club Shoot, 6 p.m.
July 19: South Norfolk Conservative Association, Open Shoot, Kirby Cave Hall, Nr. Bungay, 6 p.m.

The Doctor Deadfall, a simple variation of the Samson.

Round the Game Preserves

by David Imrie

ACCORDING to an old book which I was allowed to see comparatively recently, foxes were caught in the fell country before organised hunting became general in pits which were baited with dead poultry. These pits were not deep, but they had well-built stone walls and floors to frustrate digging by vulpine prisoners, and were covered with heavy lids (presumably of slate stone) which had a circular opening each in the middle. The theory was that foxes must jump into the pits to reach the bait, and were unable to jump out again, because although they might be able to touch the hole in the lid, they could not reach the walls with their hind claws for leverage.

I confess that I should like to have some practical proof before I accepted these ancient claims. No doubt, these traps were made by many dalesmen in a desperate attempt to stop a persistent enemy but I am convinced that foxes looked into them often without trying to seize the alluring bait; for the fox does not jump anywhere thoughtlessly. Perhaps in very hard weather he might be persuaded to cast some of his customary caution aside, and that is about all that one can reasonably say, except that the chances of success would be greater if live bait had been used.

In passing, I must mention that I have heard of only one fox which jumped into a hole and could not return. This one was, however, chased hard by two hounds. All three finished up in an old mine working on Lord's Seat above the village of Thornthwaite, and when rescuers arrived a few days later to investigate some faint barking, they discovered that the fox had been almost completely eaten. But this is rather different.

A Very Old Trap

However, this old pit trap reminded me that the keeper today can secure or kill quite a variety of creatures without using any spring-operated engine. Poaching cats can be caught alive and unharmed in a narrow box with a drop door at one end which is released when the cat pulls the bait attached to a string at the other. A bigger variation was, in fact, used two or three years ago by a keeper to discourage a rogue badger which had killed some of his young pheasants. This is a very old type of trap. Some months ago I even saw it in use on a television programme. On that occasion it was made of stakes and boughs, and, baited with a piece of goat's flesh, it caught a giant lizard (romantically described as a dragon) in the East Indies.

Long ago an elderly keeper told me of a trap which he had used frequently to catch rabbits as they passed through "smouts" in stone walls. Unfortunately I never pressed him for details, but I understand that the trap was a sunken box with a door on top which worked see-saw fashion except that it dropped down on one side only, and precipitated the rabbit underneath. A weight on the other side brought the door back into position ready for the next catch. For weeks before the offensive started the tilting doors were secured so that rabbits could run over them without realising that they had treacherous possibilities. One must assume that the boxes were fairly big.

Commonest Springless Trap

Probably the commonest springless trap in use on the game preserves of this country is the wire-netting pheasant catcher. Its efficiency depends entirely on the partial stupidity of its prisoners; for there is nothing whatever to prevent them from escaping if they had a little of the right kind of sense, which is apparently not lacking in rabbits. I have, in fact, surprised these rodents inside pheasant catchers while they were busy eating the bait, and they invariably made straight for the tunnel. Many birds are, of course, just as stupid inside this trap as pheasants are. Jays, pigeon, rooks, jackdaws, hawks, and songsters will flutter about vainly instead of taking advantage of the obvious exit.

It is also true that many of these birds would not be able to enter this trap if the tunnel were cylindrical. It is the bell mouth which persuades them to push their way into the tempting bait. I once heard of a man who wished to catch a buzzard for some purpose of his own and he put down a cage baited with dead rabbits near a tree where the hawk was in the habit of sitting; but he did not get the bird, because he knew nothing of its mentality. The entrances to this so-called trap were simply two small holes in the netting roof, which the buzzard had not the ability to detect. He would have done better with an ordinary pheasant catcher.

There is another kind of cage trap which he might have used successfully, although the trapping of a buzzard was even then a legal offence. This trap is generally set for sparrow-hawks. The type which I have seen was about four feet high and two feet square. It was divided into two compartments, and the top one had the greater cubic capacity. A hinged lid covered with wire-netting closed this upper chamber; but when the trap was in action, it was propped open by a stick which was connected at an angle by another rod to a perch in the middle of the upper part of the trap. In the lower compartment were a few sparrows. This trap exploits the fact that a sparrow-hawk likes to kill its own food. The idea is that its predatory instincts are aroused by the sight of the live sparrows in the bottom of the cage, and eventually it goes into the top part in its attempts to reach them, where it inevitably jumps on the perch. This dislodges the prop, and the lid falls into the shut position. The main drawback to this trap is that live sparrows are not always easy to get.

Standard Made Crow-Trap

Although I have already said that rooks and jackdaws can be caught in pheasant catchers, a special cage trap has been evolved for use against these pests, and the Ministry of Agriculture has approved a standard model, which is supposed also to eliminate carrion crows. A diagram lies in front of me at the moment. It advocates a six-foot cubic cage made of two by two rails and one inch mesh netting with a cone entrance occupying all the roof space which terminates in a nine inch ring of netting one foot deep. This very big cone is, incidentally, hung from the corners on steel rods six-foot long, which are screwed to the uprights. Here is part of the baiting instructions: "It is an advantage, after laying plenty of bait, to put in the trap as a decoy an ordinary fowl (broody hen) which can be removed as soon as one or two birds have been caught. It is permissible by law to use a live decoy in a cage, provided it is not tethered in any way and not kept for this purpose for longer than 24 hours, but food and water must be kept in the trap. Perhaps I should mention that this trap ought to be fitted with a hinged door for the removal of the captured birds.

Despite the approval given to this design by the Infestation Control Division of the Ministry of Agriculture I would rather have a cage with a removable top for use against carrions, so that I could have a pre-baiting period before opening the real offensive Practical experience has convinced me that carrions are reluctant to enter any sort of cage without very strong encouragement

Now, if we consider springless traps for use against stoats, weasels, hedgehogs, and (possibly) poaching cats, we immediately think of the figure-4 or Samson, which has stood the test of centuries. This is merely a slab of stone or concrete flag supported ingeniously by three interlocking sticks. When the horizontal one (to which is attached a small piece of flesh) is tugged by the predator, the heavy stone comes down and kills it instantly.

But the figure-4 is not too easy to set, and a simpler trap of the same kind has been used successfully by at least one keeper. It is called the Doctor Deadfall, because it provides a cure for many ills on the game preserve, and a diagram showing its action was sent to me a few months ago by a keen shooting man. I made a photograph from this, and it illustrates my article. Anyone can see at a glance how the trap works. The predator pulls at the bait, which ought to be firmly attached to the shorter stick. This throws out the longer support, thereby releasing the stone, and another pest is eliminated. Unfortunately I mislaid the correspondent's address; but if he sees this, I offer him my sincere thanks.

Setting a long net as part of an anti-rabbit drive in the New Forest.

The Young Shot

Rabbit Control

by Petrel

MY local paper tells me that at the last and recent meeting of our county branch of the National Farmers' Union, the question of rabbit control was accorded primary and serious consideration in view of reports of the increasing reappearance of this pest throughout the country. A full and earnest discussion ensued, as a result of which, if you can really call it a result, it was agreed that local branches all over the county should have their attention drawn to the necessity of setting up either rabbit clearance societies under the Ministry of Agriculture's pound for pound grant scheme, or some local system of control. As to the latter set-up, I am still in the dark, and I wonder just what sort of local system the meeting had in mind. In fact, cynical though it may sound, I wonder just how much forrarder the anti-rabbit campaign will be advanced as a result of these decisions, at least in this immediate neighbourhood, for similar speeches have been made ever since the rabbit virtually disappeared from the district, three years ago, but so far, save on one or two of the larger estates, there has been little apparent sign of action.

Fortunately — or unfortunately, if you are one of those rebels still skirmishing on behalf of what looks to me like a lost cause—there has, so far, been no need for any extensive and expensive operations for reducing a revived and reorganised enemy. A source of considerable embarrassment to me during the past ten days has been the request from a " customer " for a rabbit. What was once the easiest of orders to fulfil has become a major undertaking, with no guarantee at all about delivery date. Certainly I know where there is a coney or two, but they are scattered and not easily accessible. To drive five miles on the offchance is a different proposition from taking the gun from the rack and walking across the lane for a quick couple of shots and the same number of rabbits. Wiring in the old favourite meadows is a waste of time. Ten to one the single coney that runs the gauntlet at this season will be a youngster that merely knocks the snare askew.

Need for Control

There are others, of course, who do not share my difficulty, but would welcome it. Rabbits of which they thought they were well rid for all have suddenly popped up again, and even though these cannot, at the moment, be said to constitute a menace to crops, that time may come again. The necessity of controlling the struggling resuscitants is for this reason all the more apparent.

Ever since the advent of myxomatosis I have tried to keep an open mind and a fair sense of proportion in respect of the rabbit. If the word traitor is synonymous with that of realist then I fear I must admit to being a traitor, for the more I see of farming and the countryside without the rabbit, the more I must agree that the absence of the pest is of general benefit to all. If I am prejudiced, it is because I live in a part of the world which before the pestilence was barren and unproductive, and which since the disease struck, has proved to be capable of bearing corn and grass crops on a par with the best.

A Profitable Business

Three years ago there were farms in this district which sold for a song for the simple reason that rabbits made their cultivation a waste of time. And this in spite of the employment of skilled rabbit trappers and the efforts of the local man who had always had the rabbiting. The latter freely admits that he was coining £200 per annum from his catch, but in spite of his efforts—or more likely because of the profit that was thus represented—it was impossible to grow a corn crop on these acres. As soon as it showed its head above ground, it was sawn off short by the selective and insatiable predators.

The team of professionals who ranged their activities over another three counties besides proved of only limited worth, for rabbit control depends on a constant effort, and these men were only catching in spasms when the job made their presence worthwhile. In between their visits the rabbits had time to recover, and by the time the trappers returned, the last state was almost as bad as the first.

Mark you, this was no easy ground to control. Just as the conscientious gamekeeper's efforts are hampered by neglected territory outside his boundary where vermin can breed unmolested, so it was in this case. Acres of scrub and common land beyond the march of properly managed farms and shoots have provided the rabbit with a breeding and holding sanctuary untouched by human enemies, from which it can infiltrate with ease into richer pastures, and if myxomatosis had not come along to decimate and almost wipe out this no-man's-land population, these neglected acres would still provide a source of destructive annoyance to farmers whose land bordered them.

It is all very well to say that rabbit control is a simple matter. Indeed it is if farmers co-operate and their land borders acreages where the rabbit problem is tackled in a sensible and conscientious manner by owners and tenants of like mind. Leave it to the lads of the village, who will be only too pleased to take advantage of the chance to earn themselves a bit of sport and a rabbit dinner, is an argument often voiced, which would be a sound one if only it were possible to find enough interested lads who were prepared to give the time to the job. Unfortunately, although there are usually plenty of keen young sportsmen who would be glad of the chance, they are only willing to make the effort when it suits them. And that means when the sport is at its best. At the last meeting of our local gun club, which bases its operations on the first part of its constitution—to co-operate with farmers and landowners in the destruction of pigeon, rabbits and all pests harmful to agriculture — it was stressed that this principle applies not only when it suits the members, but all through the year. The present time provides a case in point. This not a good season for shooting pigeon, but that is no reason for a poor attendance at Saturday shoots. Rooks, crows, jackdaws and jays all require attention and come within the meaning of the constitution, and indeed there are places where they do more damage than pigeon. It is the duty of those who have taken it upon themselves to deal with vermin in the widest sense, to see that they do not neglect this side of the job.

MR. ROBERT CHURCHILL

WITH the death at 71, of Robert Churchill, chairman and managing director of E. J. Churchill (Gunmakers) Ltd., the gun trade lost one of its most colourful and controversial personalities. By the general public he will be remembered chiefly as the expert witness in many famous criminal trials involving the use of firearms, where his evidence, generally decisive, was based soundly on his own painstaking methods of scientific examination and identification of firearms and bullets. This science, blended with practical experience—and in his day he was one of the best game shots in Europe and had shot in most countries—was demonstrated to game shooters of this country in the early days of this century when Churchill was introducing and perfecting his revolutionary short barrelled guns which caused such a furor of argument wherever gunmakers and shooting men foregathered.

As a shooting coach Churchill was one of, if not the best. The theory of forward allowance was largely exploded by him. Swing on to the bird and put your trust in the eye for the rest was his principle, and we have proved to our own satisfaction the worth of this advice, certainly at normal ranges with a short barrelled gun.

His book "Game Shooting" stands as a memorial to the soundness of his teaching, for it is without doubt, the best and most comprehensive textbook on the subject yet published. The last time we saw Robert Churchill in action was on his own shooting ground at Crayford when Harold Crang came over from Canada to set up his record for 1,000 clays killed in an hour. Although suffering from severe arthritis, Churchill treated us to a delightful display of shooting and on that day inaugurated an event that promised to become an annual occasion to which we should look forward for some time to come.

We shall miss that meeting this year. But we shall miss the friendly presence in Orange Street of one of the last of the great practical gunmakers even more.

Sanctuary in a Playground

by Gunstock

Next year the annual general meeting of W.A.G.B.I. takes place at Blackpool. The following article reveals the enterprise of the Fylde W.A. in the centre of Britain's largest holiday resort.

PICTURE Blackpool and the mind runs to fabulous dance halls, dominating tower, glittering Golden Mile, acres of sand, the show world's best entertainers—a town of artificial fun. Yet, in the middle of all the bright lights, under the very noses of 10,000,000 holidaymakers a year, the Fylde District Wildfowlers' Association, which is the Blackpool W.A. in all but name, has launched a venture as daring in its complexities the building of the tower itself.

The club is establishing a sanctuary, and succeeding, on the Stanley Park Boating Lake, a 22 acre stretch of water populated for six months of the year by pleasure craft, with all the hooligans and vandals that go with them.

The wildfowlers of Blackpool evolved their plan two years ago, four years after the formation of the club. W.A.G.B.I. had appealed to its members to do their bit in the wildfowl rearing scheme. For the Fylde W.A., with its officials based on Blackpool, whose beaches were definitely not conducive to wildfowl rearing, the idea offered nothing but problems.

Marton Mere, a natural lake of approximately one acre, bordering the country on the edge of the town, was suggested, and dropped just as quickly. The Mere had been a sanctuary for years, but its boundaries are ignored by those who give shooters a bad name and no bird is given a peaceful passage about its shores. Effectively to patrol such a place would be impossible even to a club with 170 members.

Importance of Cover

A water with nesting cover, watched every day of the week, every week of the year, would be the ideal. Such a place was Stanley Park. There was a Park staff from near dawn till dusk and islands and banks thick with cover. But would nesting wildfowl succeed in raising their young among the crowds and stuttering motorboats?

The idea was laughed at by some, but the club went ahead with its plan. The lake was already stocked by approximately 200 mallard. Formal application was made to the Town Council for the club to help to police the lake, to instal nesting boxes, erect wire-netting pens and introduce more birds. The scheme was given the council's full support and, with the co-operation of the Parks department, Operation Hatch began.

Spring 1957 produced a diversity of problems. The club found that their biggest enemies were the egg-stealing boys, plus the occasional marauder who crept down with gun or rifle, slaughtered a semi-tame mallard on the banks and vanished back to the roads before he could be cut off.

The club was then lent a fibre-glass dinghy and kept up a constant water patrol during the busy weekends. That first spring produced a better hatching than the lake had seen for years. Obviously the plan was going to succeed once teething troubles had been overcome and a way had been found to keep out the egg hunters.

Introduction of Geese

The club introduced nine Canada geese, six Chinese geese, a pair of Black East Indian duck and three pinkfeet as a basis of their collection. The winter months were spent erecting wire fencing, notices warning the public to keep off the two islands and searching for a new craft.

An old dinghy was discovered lying upside down in an estuary creek in another part of the county. Her owner was traced, persuaded to part, and the boat was transported to the lake, to be stripped, partly rebuilt and have an engine (also bought by the club) installed, all with the help of the Parks Department. The dinghy, named "Curlew" was pushed out without ceremony—the official launching and christening is to be performed by the club president, Sir Roland Robinson, M.P. for Blackpool South.

To provide an additional watch, the club evolved a scheme in which headmasters of local schools are asked to co-operate in naming schoolboys of reliable character, and with an interest in wild life, to join the club as junior wardens. The idea was a success, but materialised too late to help much this spring.

The hatchings this year were again above average, but too often the "no entry" notices were ignored, and the netting fences torn down. The greater proportion of eggs were stolen, All the goose nests, apart from a late laying by one of the pinkfeet, who was still sitting when this article was written, were robbed. But at least the East Indian duck produced three young to ride the waves with two score young mallard.

Success in the Distance

Success is still a long way off, but this winter the club and the Parks Department, are to erect bigger and better fencing round the rearing sections. It will be high enough and strong enough, to be impregnable. Club officials contend that once they have established these safe rearing pens, they will have a sanctuary second to few in this country.

I made my first visit to the lake, at the invitation of the club, the other day. In a hut on a disused landing stage a patrol headquarters has been established. By its entrance stands Donald, the club's mascot, a huge albatross given by a public school who, no doubt, wanted to widen its corridors so vast is the glass case necessary to house Donald. The bird attracts much attention. His identity causes great speculation among the public and one woman was heard to utter, "That's one of them birds that carries babies off!"

Which brings me to another odd tale. About the lakeside, near to the hut, strut two guinea-fowl. Until a short time ago they had spent all their days, apart from extreme infancy, in a spacious cage on the roof of the nearby cafe. So long had they watched the duck that, when released, they flew straight on to the water and nearly expired in their foolishness. Hard to believe, perhaps, but the storyteller swore it was true.

On the day of my visit the ducklings were still in their down. The air was seldom empty of duck and everywhere the launch took us there was some form of wildfowl.

I heard of the recent depredations of a young black-backed gull, learning early in life the art of marauding. For several days the bird had been quartering the lake, swooping on ducklings to carry them high and drop them to their deaths on the shore. What happened to the gull, I will leave you to guess.

On one of the islands we came across Joey, the white farmyard goose who, since, being joined on the lake by the Chinese geese, has taken to himself two females of that species. He is the dominating character among the feathered inhabitants of the lake, with a wicked eye and a knack of getting to the food first. He protested loudly at our intervention and demonstrated his dislikes with a display of neck-stretching.

It took an hour to complete the tour. The possibilities are undoubtedly great and if all that the club has planned succeeds, it will be accomplishing much that W.A.G.B.I. preaches, and will be setting an example to clubs who could do similar work with fewer complications.

The launch "Curlew" with Mr. Basil Akhurst, the club secretary, at the controls.

Snapshots of hunted stags have been called for from the public as part of an intensified campaign to try and prove that deer-hunting is cruel. The appeal was made in London at the first annual meeting of the National Committee for the Abolition of Deer Hunting. Mr. Edward Hemingway, chairman of the committee, said: "Every snapshot or piece of up-to-date evidence which gives further proof of the gross cruelty of this barbarous sport will help in our fight to end it."

Mr. Hemingway said that the committee's special "secret" investigator—an ex-detective inspector who rides at deer hunts to obtain on-the-spot evidence—will carry on his work in the next hunting season.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Letters and photographs are invited for this page. They should be as brief as possible, and the names and addresses of senders must be given, though these need not necessarily be published. Correspondence should be addressed to The Editor, The Shooting Times & Country Magazine, 29 Old Bond Street, London, W.1. 'Phone: HYDe Park 2556/2557.

A GOOSE CHASE IN JUNE

Sir,—Your readers may be interested to read of our "out of season wild goose chase" that took place on June 21 in Knowsley Park, through the courtesy of the Earl of Derby.

Major W. D. D. Evans, Lord Derby's agent, advised me that there were a number of Canada goslings surplus to requirements that W.A.G.B.I. could have. I then contacted John Ruxton (Westmorland W.A.) advising him of the arrangements that had been made and he and a friend appeared at White Mans Dam along with a 9ft. fibre-glass dinghy and outboard and proceeded (in torrential rain) to catch up 36 goslings and two flightless adult Canadas with the help of three estate-workers.

These birds were divided up, 12 goslings and two adults being taken by Mr. E. S. J. Standen, chairman of the Darlington and District Gun Club and W.A., fifteen goslings by Mr. Dick Holmes, John Carter and Don Foster, chairman, hon. secretary and executive member respectively of the Home Counties W.A., and, but for a couple that I removed to Flintshire, the remainder John Ruxton took back to Westmorland. I might add that the 15 taken by the Home Counties W.A. spent the night in my garden and there is little doubt that the lawn on which they were penned will show evidence of this fact for many months to come!

In closing, I should like to congratulate those fowlers who took part in this "operation," for their undoubted enthusiasm in travelling long distances in support of the W.A.G.B.I. policy of stocking new areas from overpopulated areas is nothing short of admirable and shows to a marked degree the spirit that is abroad in W.A.G.B.I.'s affiliated clubs today.

J. W. ANDERTON.
(Hon. Secretary, The Wildfowlers' Association of Great Britain and Ireland), 19 Castle Street, Liverpool, 2.

WILDFOWLING DOGS: SECOND-HAND GUNS

Sir,—I now know exactly how Jack Collins felt when he lost Sally. I have just lost my labrador bitch.

Unfortunately my bitch had proved barren and I cannot obtain another of the same breeding. When I obtain a puppy of the colour I require, I fully intend to train it to run in to fall. This is an essential for wildfowling if one is to give oneself every chance.

Recent editorial comments on present day guns did not bring the response I expected. I cannot support them. A few weeks ago I visited Blands of West Strand to be fitted with a new gun. The courtesy and patience taken to ensure that the gun was a perfect fit was an eye-opener to me. Needless to say I am delighted with the gun.

A gunmaker's second-hand prices are based on the price of a comparable new gun; one therefore pays what the gun is worth, no more, no less. A gunmaker is jealous of his reputation and that is your and my safeguard. A private seller very seldom has a reputation to uphold.

A. ALLINSON-CURRAH,
Alnmouth, Northumberland.

Don Foster, Dick Holmes, and John Carter with part of the catch, in Lt.-Commander Anderton's garden in the Wirral.

CURLEW AND VERMIN

Sir,—Your correspondents, J.F.G.T. and D. A. Woolley, in the June 27 issue allow me to "kill two birds with one shot." I am a member of a shoot in north Cheshire, and there is no doubt that we have more curlews this year than previously. Whether they are breeding on our marshy ground I do not know.

Regarding Mr. Woolley's "woodpigeon," I am like him—I do not class them as "vermin." In my young days, rats and mice were vermin, and I feel that we are using the word too freely in denoting what are called pests. I do class as vermin, magpies and jays however; there are far too few shot, and I blame the price of cartridges and also the fact as far as I know, that they are not edible. I agree that "Tower-Bird" should get his pole out and poke them out.

H. C. BICKERTON,
Withington, Manchester.

THE PIGEON POKING MENACE

Sir,—The woodpigeon—friend or foe? May I heartily applaud the letter from D. A. Woolley, in last week's issue, whose indignation has been so righteously aroused on the subject of "pigeon poking"? I very nearly rushed into print myself when the article recommending this practice appeared a fortnight ago, but decided to restrain myself then, and have only reconsidered my decision due to the unwarranted rejoinder by "Tower-Bird" in the footnote to Mr. Woolley's letter!

A similar practice was recommended in another journal devoted to shooting among other things, about four years ago, but my immediate reply was not even acknowledged, let alone printed in that glossy paper.

However, in all seriousness, I must admit that pigeon can be a serious pest at times—I have recently had to replant over 2,000 brussels sprouts, and then by a criss cross pattern of binder twine two foot above the plants successfully to prevent pigeon eating these later plants as well—but I really do think that a lot of the damage is over estimated! Laid corn is very liable to be eaten up you say? Well the farmer is unlikely to be able to harvest it anyway! Kale ruined by pigeon during frost and snow? Well the frost makes it uneatable by anything else!

Young greenstuff does definitely suffer the depredations of pigeon at this time of year in particular, but my system of a criss-cross mesh of binder twine, or old telephone cable just above the plants has been a great success, and I can heartily recommend it for small plots of ground.

Three summers ago I was called in to shoot pigeon on a sizeable acreage of young sprouts, but I gave up when the first six pigeon's crops proved to be full of "cabbage white caterpillars." The remainder of that flock saved that field!

I feel that there is always a tendency for farmers—and others—to lay the blame for poor crops on to first rabbits and now pigeon. It is sometimes true of course, but let us keep shooting them and not poking them.

Anyway the M. of A. might get hold of the idea and use it instead of narcotics or myxomatosis or something, and exterminate the lot, and then where would we rough shooters be? We'd get no sympathy from the farmers either.

No, let us confine our summer nest poking activities to crows and magpies, and then we would all have more duck and game to shoot!

"FLYING FOWLER,"
Shropshire.

Sir, — I read Mr. Woolley's letter on this subject carefully and only digress from his views on one particular point—namely, the inference that "Tower-Bird" is a "toast and marmalade" shooter.

His letter has brought to light an issue which should have been discussed in these columns at a much

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earlier date. The shooting of nesting pigeon, the destruction of their eggs, and the target practice on the squabs, has always been a dogma which I could not accept.

However, I think that in matters like this, one should find out, if possible, the views of other shooting men in their particular area.

To this end, I have made inquiries in north-east Derry and north Antrim, and in *all* cases the answer has been the same, disapproval—even disgust! The nesting period for woodpigeon in this area runs approximately from mid-April to the latter end of August. The shooting of pigeon seems to run from the last few days of August to about mid-March, and we have more than our fair share of them.

These birds have never become a menace here, although the country is comparatively well wooded, and afforested. The answer is not hard to find. Go to the door of any farmer in the aforesaid area and with very few exceptions one can obtain permission to shoot pigeon, hares (of which there are literally thousands, and oddly enough, our cattle and sheep seem to get enough to eat), or either of the common game birds, snipe, and woodcock.

It would appear from the desperate appeals for rough shooting, or for pigeon shooting, expressed by the shooting fraternity in the areas where these "vermin" exist, that the market gardeners and farmers have asked for all they are getting.

J. McCandless,
Coleraine, N. Ireland.

["Tower-Bird" writes: "I think a better sense of perspective is required at this juncture. In the first place, it should be realised that if every shooter went pigeon-nest-poking, there would still be plenty of the birds left to breed and multiply. It was not my intention to infer that the pigeon should be totally destroyed as a species, but that its numbers could be better reduced where the birds are too plentiful by destroying the eggs and squabs at nesting time, and by shooting old birds on the nest. By doing this, the rough shooter will not suffer. There will still be plenty of pigeon left for him to shoot, but countless pounds' worth of farm crops will be saved. It seems obvious to me that, if pigeon can be reasonably reduced by shooting combined with the method I have outlined, there is far less likelihood of the Ministry of Agriculture and the scientists striving to find a virus, or some other deadly treatment with the idea of exterminating the pigeon as they have tried to exterminate the rabbit. I need only repeat that I am one of the keenest pigeon shooters in the country, but not sufficiently selfish to turn a blind eye to the very serious damage the pigeon hordes do to agriculture and think only of the bags I can make."—Ed.]

GOOSE FEVER

Sir,—We were truly amazed by the confessions of your correspondent "Gunstock" in the issue of your excellent journal (issue June 20). Such results as he describes are, in our opinion, those which one usually associates with one's shooting apprenticeship. Using 3in. cartridges loaded with BB shot to blaze away at such temptingly near targets and then merely managing to "wing" the quarry is surely the type of record that one prefers to forget rather than publish.

One wonders how he would fare against the humble pigeon.

J. Nicholls, C. Nicholls,
N. Nicholls, K. Farn,
Baxterley, nr. Atherstone.

[But 3in. cartridges loaded with BB, Messrs. Nicholls, Nicholls, Nicholls and Farn, are the right cartridges for geese, and no fowler can say whether the birds will fly high or low. We do not publish accounts of successful shots only.—Ed.]

BENCH REST RIFLE ASSOCIATION

Sir,—If any readers are interested in the possibility of the formation of an Association in the United Kingdom for Bench Rest Rifle Shooting, I would be grateful if they would get in touch with me. This is a fascinating sport, chasing the ultimate in accuracy, and I feel sure that many readers will be interested, though at the moment facilities for entering into this sport on a large scale are almost non-existent.

Richard Arnold,
64 Adelaide Road, N.W.3.

What is this strange object which was found in a box of muzzle-loading equipment? Readers' opinions are invited.

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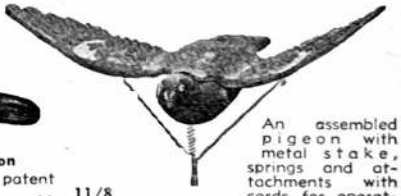
Whole Pigeon (for lofting). By means of two screw eyes screwed into the body top and bottom, a cord attached with weight such as stick can be thrown over a branch, the decoy then can be hoisted up into the required position 12/3



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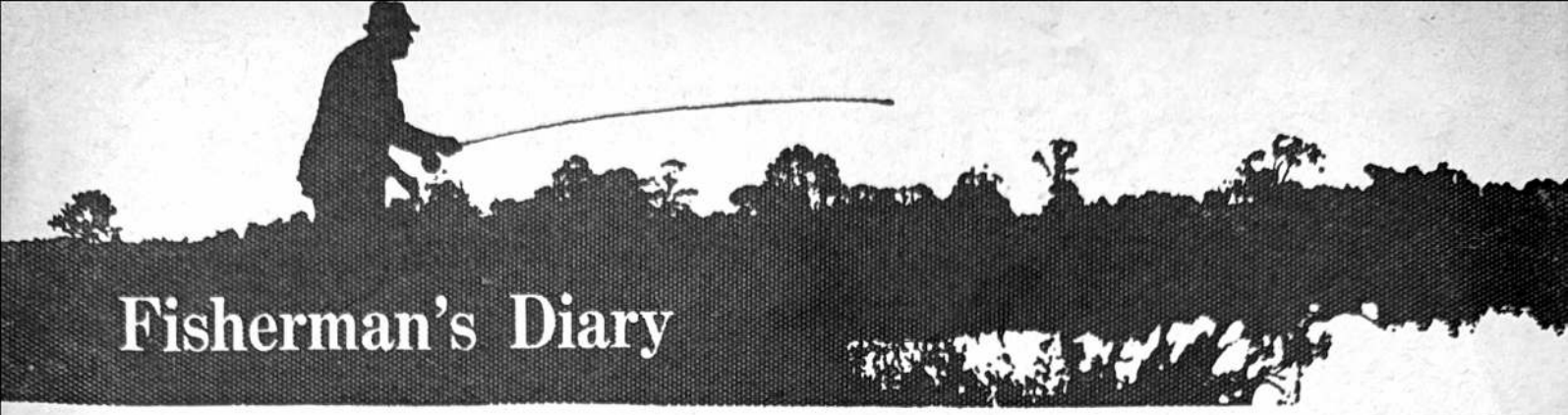


Fisherman's Diary

AWKWARD questions seem to crop up in series of three, like new words or subjects. A week ago I was asked what was the open season for crayfish fishing, and apart from having a general idea that it was any time I did not know. Two days later I was asked the same question by letter, and a further oral inquiry completed the series.

I have caught plenty of crayfish but have never worried much about times and seasons, though for no very definite reason I have kept to the fish season for the particular water, mainly, I suppose, because I find it distasteful to mess about in the water when the fish are spawning.

Crayfish are the 4in. to 5in. freshwater crustaceans that resemble lobsters so closely, and since there is no close season for eating lobsters there is presumably no close season for eating crayfish: though, like lobsters, female crayfish are best liked by epicures when they are "berried," *i.e.*, carrying their bunches of coral eggs on their swimarets.

The many books I have looked up contain no clue, with one exception. That excellent guide, *The Northern Angler's Handbook*, by T. K. Wilson, contains the following curious provision under the heading of the River Ure or Yore: "In the neighbourhood of Hawes the river abounds with crayfish, and fishing for these begins on August 10 and ends on September 30, tickets for the whole period costing 1s." That short season, I feel, is designed for a purpose unconnected with the biology of the crayfish.

Hints from the Kitchen

I know that crayfish are served all the year round in Germany and I believe that also happens in France, though a purist might say that this does not affect the situation because the *Edelkrebs* of Germany and the *écrevisse à pattes rouges* of France are the red-clawed crayfish *(Astacus fluviatilis)* whereas the English species is a lesser one — physically and gastronomically—known as the white-clawed crayfish *(A. pallipes)*. In Germany these are *Steinkrebs* and in France *écrevisse à pattes blanches*.

Red-clawed crayfish taste a little better than the white-clawed, but it was certainly of the latter native species that Mrs. Beeton wrote. I own and delight in one of the fullest editions of her *Book of Household Management* (that of 1888) but she was as vague as everybody else over crayfish. Boiled crayfish and one form of crayfish soup are described as being in season all the year round, while in another soup recipe the season is given as January to July.

I should like to quote her recipes but they are too long for this column. Go to it and catch your crayfish and look up Mrs. Beeton while they cleanse themselves in pure water for at least twelve hours.

Filthy Beaches

The 1957 holiday season brought less complaints about oil pollution of the beaches than had been the case in the previous four or five years and there was a general hope that the regulations imposed internationally and particularly by this country were having some effect. Either last year's "summer" kept so many people from the beaches that there were less to complain or ships at sea were really exercising some control over the discharge of waste oil, for the situation seemed easier.

This year, however, the plague is back. Lumps of filthy soft oil lie just below the sand to ruin the clothes of people who sit down on what appears to be a clean beach. It is clogging fishing nets and gear and interferes in some cases with the running of engines in small boats.

Some resorts protest against this nuisance; others lie low and say nothing for tourist trade reasons. I will not add to the troubles of the straightforward towns by mentioning them here by name, but some idea of the seriousness of the trouble can be gathered from the fact that in one place four tons of waste oil were removed from 800 yards of beach.

Torbay Shark Fishing

It was announced at the Looe headquarters of the Shark Angling Club of Great Britain that a start is to be made this month on a scheme to make Torquay an important shark angling centre.

Mrs. Hetty Eathorne, and her husband, of Brixham, are keenly interested in the venture. Both are experienced shark and deep-sea anglers, and Mrs. Eathorne holds the world's record for a porbeagle shark. Sharks are usually caught from 12 to 20 miles offshore, so that the point of departure from the coast of Devon and Cornwall is not so important as the availability of suitable boats and of skippers who have learned, at Looe or elsewhere, the complicated technique of attracting sharks by the proper use of "rubby-dubby" in conjunction with the prevailing wind and current.

Far more people now want to go shark fishing than can be catered for at Looe, and the new development may take care of the surplus.

Herrings on Hooks

A great many people still believe that because herrings are primarily plankton eaters they cannot be caught on hooks. This view has been disproved, and in recent years some painstaking and observant anglers have developed a technique of herring angling which gives good results.

Odd herrings have been hooked by accident in daylight by people fishing for other species, but so far as I know the only recognised herring-angling method is to fish on winter evenings in areas of water lighted by quayside lamps, with the bait suspended 2ft. to 8ft. below the surface.

It was with some surprise, that I read the following note in the fish market news in my daily paper: "About 150 stone hooked mackerel at 6s. 3d. to 7s. per stone, herrings at 5s. per stone caught on hand lines."

That is a new one to me, and I invariably glance through the catches. What is more, it implies that herrings take bait at the bottom in summer, a complete reversal of angling conditions. It may, of course, be a misprint.

World's Biggest Match

Birmingham Angling Association's annual competition for its members is, I believe, the world's biggest angling match. Even so it cannot cater for more than a quarter of its members for the tickets are limited to 5,000 and the membership is well over 20,000.

The match itself will not be fished until the autumn, but the sale of tickets started on July 7. In past years they have been sold out long before the chosen date.

It is just possible that some occasional competition in the United States or elsewhere has drawn more than 5,000 competitors when the prize money has been provided as an advertising stunt, but the B.A.A. match is a regular annual one. It requires little imagination to conjure up the organising ability needed for the office work, the pegging and the transport arrangements before 5,000 anglers can each be seated happily at his ordained pitch at the right time.

Worcester Canal

This year up to one thousand of the B.A.A. competitors can, if they wish, fish in still water, and the requisite length of the Worcester and Birmingham Canal will be pegged out for them.

They were plenty of anglers in the late 18th-century, and I have no doubt many of them fished the Worcester Canal as soon as fish moved into it, but they could hardly be expected in 1791 to envisage the great development of match fishing.

The Severn end of the canal has 58 locks in 16 miles, which puts it, I believe, second on the list in this respect, being only just beaten by a 20-mile stretch of the Rochdale Canal with 74 locks.

Most of the English canals were cut in the fifty years between 1770 and 1820. Fish would penetrate them naturally, though they might take a long time ta establish themselves in the high-level pounds. I expect a good deal of local stocking was done, for our forefathers enjoyed shifting fish about in straw-lined milk churns.

Irish Touring

I have received the 1958 list of hotels and other accommodation in Ireland approved by the Irish Tourist Board. It runs to more than 100 pages and is a well-prepared guide. The usual sort of symbols are used to indicate railways, garages, golf courses, etc., and angling has three. A leaping fish means salmon and trout fishing; a less active bream-like fish means coarse fishing; and a still more stylised sunfish means sea fishing. The point I wish to make is that while nearly every centre has the leaping fish, rather more than ninety now show the coarse fish sign, a very great increase.

The Whitesmith's Arms

An addition to my collection of inn names during my recent travels was "The Whitesmith's Arms." My dictionary tells me that a whitesmith is a tinsmith. I was also agreeably rectified in "The Old Rectifyer."

CORIDON.

Sharps Shooting

by

A. C. Jacobs and G. D. Conway

THIS article is dedicated to all those fellow-sufferers from the slings and arrows of outraged officialdom, in the hope that they may derive some comfort from the knowledge that we have survived an ordeal, and lived to tell the tale of how a Sharps carbine fired again. This particular weapon came into the possession of G.D.C. in the winter of 1955, purchased as a museum piece. After some months he noted that he was developing an intense desire to fire the gun, satisfaction no longer being produced by mere rapturous gaze. And so the tale of troubles began.

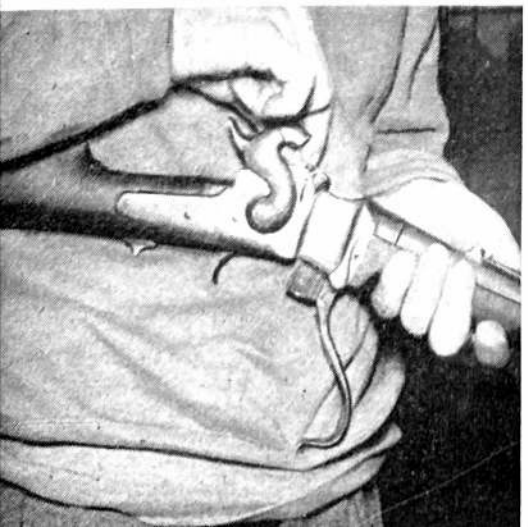
The gun in question is a cavalry carbine with an 18in. barrel. The true calibre is .533in., commonly known as '54 or '52 linen as it used a combustible linen cartridge. The weapon is a breechloader, employing a falling-block breech actuated by a trigger-guard lever. The percussion ignition system is utilised to fire the arm, the primer being detonated on an external nipple, situated on the top right hand side of the breech, by a large side-hammer. The gun has provision for one of the automatic priming mechanisms, in this case the Laurence pellet method, though some were adapted to take Maynard tape primers. The original cartridge consisted of either a pointed or flat headed bullet with a Minie base, a charge of 50 grs. of black powder, the powder and all but the tip of the head being enclosed in a tube of linen or paper. As with most cavalry weapons the gun is short stocked fore and aft.

To prepare the gun for action the trigger guard is pushed downwards and forwards thus dropping the breech block to expose the rear of the chamber. A cartridge is then pushed into the chamber; but some of the tube will be found to remain protruding out of the back of the chamber. The trigger-guard is now pulled backwards and upwards, the block rises shearing off the excess tube and exposing the powder contained within the rest to the internal blowhole. The hammer is drawn back to half cock, a percussion cap is placed on the nipple, and then the hammer is taken to full cock. The gun is now ready to fire.

A Short History

The designer of this weapon, Christian Sharps, took out his original patents in 1848. It was probably the most effective breechloader of its time, and was used by the Union Army in pre-Civil War days. The Abolitionists favoured the Sharps, notably John Brown, who used Sharps rifles during his abortive campaign against slavery. During the Civil War the Sharps products saw a great deal of service. The rifles were particularly noted for their accuracy, and Col. Berdan formed special groups of men, called Sharps-shooters, who were given sniping and other long-range shooting tasks.

The breech open, showing the falling block action and the large external hammer.



This period saw the introduction of a rim-fire version, but it was the percussion system that was in general use. At the war's end, with the rapid development of the prairies, the buffalo hunters found themselves in need of an arm that would kill both buffalo and Indians. The available repeating arms were, in the main, only effective in the latter capacity until Winchester produced their 45/90's and 50/110's. The Sharps Company were able by virtue of their simple but strong breech mechanism, to vary their product to take almost any cartridge. They started with the 50/70 Government, and when this was found to be ineffective, as a result of popular demand, the propellant loads were increased—40/90, 44/90, 45/90, 45/100, 45/120, 50/100, 50/110. In all about 60 different cartridges were manufactured. Accuracy was still a feature of the rifles, one Indian chief being sent on a premature visit to the happy hunting grounds by a buffalo hunter at a range of 1,000 yards. But the advent of magazine weapons. Mauser actions and smokeless powders resulted in a steady decline in demand for the Sharps and its final demise. After the Civil War the U.S. Army showed no interest in the design at all. However, it is rumoured that voices in the States are once again demanding a large calibre falling-block rifle.

Rolling Our Own

Having digressed into the history of the Sharps Company we were still left with the problem of what to fire in a gun for which no ammunition had been made for nearly a century. We realised that it was possible to use loose powder and ball, but the idea had no appeal as we felt "performance" might suffer. Light was shed on this question by an article in the "Gun Digest" which described how one could "roll one's own" cartridges, and gave hints on safety measures. So the gun was no longer just an infernal machine, we could initiate proceedings.

We needed a bullet mould, and took our troubles to Bill Roper, who said that "he was busy for the next couple of weeks, but would make the mould after that." He was in no way put out when we asked for specialised bullet shapes. The mould appeared on time, and as requested the base of the bullet was at the top of the mould, with the front at the bottom. Through the bottom of the mould a variety of shaped rods could be inserted to allow us to turn out solid, hollow point or open point expanding bullets. Three grease grooves were cut to minimise leading.

After purchasing a box of top-hat percussion primers we found ourselves with a gun, bullets, primers, but no gunpowder. Knowing full well that some mystic regulations must govern the sale of this substance, G.D.C. presented himself at the local police station. Unfortunately the constabulary had not dealt with such an enquiry for some time, and there was a little delay before it was learnt that application had to be made to the C.I.D. To this body he repeated his request, who demanded, without a moment's hesitation, that the gun be submitted to the Proof-House for test, before they would consider his application. To everyone's surprise the gun survived 80 grs. of powder plus a 550 gr. head. So, after the due process of law, a licence was granted, and permission to use the gun as a shooting arm was obtained. The paper for the cartridge was required to burn with the minimum of ash, and hard tracing paper was selected to meet this specification. Other grades were refused, and some stationers were somewhat surprised when, on seeking the reason for the rejection, the reply "I don't know what others do with it, but I want the paper for making cartridges" was given.

Loading Up

The great day arrived for the production of the first batch of munitions. The family was ejected from the house, and the kitchen became our "factory." The lead was melted on the gas stove in empty baked bean cans. It was found that a hot mould, too hot to hold except with heavy industrial gloves, gave the best results. The initial batch of 50 varied between 500 and 530 grains in weight, depending on style. After cooling the bullets were waxed with a 9 : 1 mixture of beeswax and tallow. The tracing paper was cut into 4 x 4 inch sections (later reduced to 3 x 3.5in.). These pieces were formed into tubes round the bullets. Waterglass was used to stick the bullets to the paper, and to act as an adhesive for the rest of the tube, for this too leaves little residue after firing. After leaving the cartridges to dry overnight, 50 grains of No. 6 powder were poured into the open end of the tube, which was then bent over and sealed down.

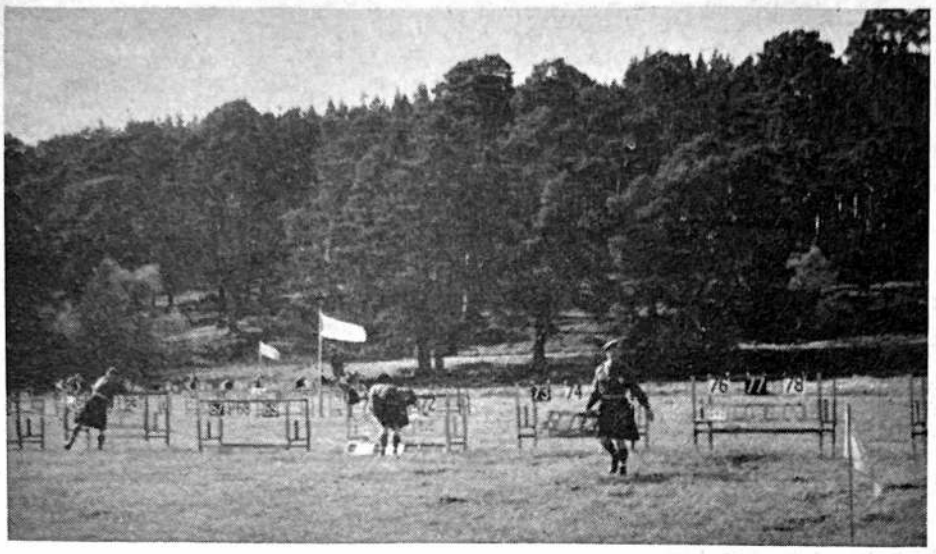
We realised that it would be difficult to shoot these rounds over the normal ranges at Bisley due to the smoke, the noise, and our inexperience as to the capabilities of this gun. The Range Superintendent lent a sympathetic ear to our pleas, and so we hired the Running Deer range, using it in splendid isolation.

Our first attempts were noted more for their pure enjoyment, rather than any high degree of accuracy. We were impressed with the contrast in recoil compared with a .303. No general improvement in accuracy was forthcoming until, as we noted in a previous article (*Shooting Times*, February 21), we reduced the bullet weight to a constant 450 grains, and raised the powder load to 55 grains. We did not consider it necessary to use a hollow or Minie base, because our bullets were fully paper patched, and an experimental series of hollow based bullets confirmed this view. No attempt was made to re-activate the automatic priming system fitted to the gun. Grouping tests showed that the gun performed reasonably, but accuracy still left room for improvement. Lately, however, the gun has been found to be accurate within its inherent limitations, chiefly because we have now learnt to allow for the delay between the primer detonation and the ignition of the propellant. This gun will never see competition use, because there is no organisation, muzzle-loaders included, that encourages the use of breechloading black powder weapons.

We would like to close with a few words of warning to others who may decide to follow our path. There are certain occupational hazards to be avoided. Burns from molten metal whilst moulding and flash burns from inefficient gas seal around the breech (wear glasses whilst shooting). Chronic heavy metal poisoning from lead fumes, and from arsenic or antimony contained in the lead are risks that should not be ignored.

THE OTHER SIDE

High winds, whirling dust, alternating high and low temperatures on top of little or no run-off about sums up May weather on the western prairies. The first mallard and pintail broods are appearing in daily increasing numbers in all three provinces. Nesting is general and we do not anticipate any serious loss of young of those which successfully hatch out their first attempts. But, we need rain and lots of it to take care of renesters and late nesting species.—"The Duckological."



Kilted target runners worked at a record pace at Grantown.

THE MOVING FINGER

by Squeaker

IT would appear that women are not the only ones who follow the dictates of fashion. Shooters are also slaves to the moving finger of change, but in our case the fashions are not those of dress, but are technical, or pseudo-technical in nature. I remember noticing that various fashions were in vogue during the year I first shot at Bisley. Quite understandably, practically everyone was using the same brand of ammunition as that used by Arthur Cook to win the Olympic Games prone championship which had been held at Bisley during the previous week. It is possible that this performer was also responsible for a sudden revival of interest in "bedding" and the study of barrel vibrations. "Cookie" had an electric bedder fitted to his match-winning rifle and at once all sorts of methods were invented for taming the vicious vibrations of target rifle barrels.

The fact that the barrel vibrates, and that the woodwork and its proper fit plays an important part in maintaining top quality accuracy had been known for many years, but the introduction to this country of the electric bedder really gave the gadget and technical brigade boys a chance to get going. Many types of bedder were introduced, and at about this time various substances were introduced for barrel bedding. Silver paper from all sorts of sources, flannelette patches, and plastic wood were, as I remember, about the most popular materials. However, fashions change and these all appear to have fallen from favour. Non-drying mastic type substances have taken their places, but apparently even their day is over. For those who have not heard, the present fad appears to favour high melting point zinc-based grease. No wonder a manual I "borrowed" at Grantown says. "Generally speaking the system chosen by one rifle manufacturer will give satisfactory results, but countless target shooters are convinced that, so far as their particular rifle is concerned, some other system gives better results."

Fully Floating

Personally I have never had any faith in these "stick," or "non-stick" methods of frame bedding and much prefer to shoot a rifle with a fully floating barrel. though I still rather hanker for an electric bedder.

Nowadays one rarely hears a shooter grousing about his bedding, probably because they have solved their self-made problems to their own satisfaction. After this spell the centre of interest appeared to shift to sights. The manufacture, sizes, and use of all sorts of sights was debated at practically every meeting and the tube sight came to the fore. I have mentioned the sudden spate of tubes of all sizes which suddenly appeared last year. I did not see one tube sight of the home made variety on display at Grantown. By home-made I mean some form of tube fitted to the existing rearsight to give a tunnel effect to the sight picture.

Tube Sight's Main Purpose

I have it on what I consider to be the highest authority that the main purpose of the tube sight is to enable one to use telescopic sight type mounts which give rigidity and as they are spring loaded reduce to a minimum the effects of backlash and wear. The improved sight picture is only an added advantage—not the primary one. I wonder what happened to all those tubes, springs and so forth which were on show last year.

One fashion which is always with us is that for stock making. I think that woodworking must be the most popular non-shooting type activity of most target shooters. The necessity for making the rifle fit the shooter is well known, but surely some shooters go too far. I remember once admiring the hand-made stock belonging to a shooter at a west coast meeting. A detachable high comb was fitted and the whole thing was very elegant; until one saw it being used. Due to the high comb the user could not see through his backsight unless he canted the rifle over quite a considerable amount. A much lower comb would have given this shooter a more comfortable position, but it would not have looked so nice. One does not like to point out such things however, as they can be very "putting off" to proud rifle owners. I sometimes wonder why some shooters bother to buy woodwork with their rifles.

So many shooters seem to think they know better than the factory. If I were in "the trade" I think I would be absolutely furious to find that after I had designed, say, an especially broad trigger, which would give the same effect as a trigger shoe, people were buying extra broad trigger shoes to fit to their extra wide triggers. Possibly the squirrel instinct?

Trigger Trouble

While we are on the subject of triggers I am reminded that about three or four years ago practically everyone I met seemed to be having trigger trouble with his, or her trigger. No matter what type of rifle was being used there were more or less constant moans about the wretched things which would apparently vary from ten ounces to ten pounds. The technical boys must have had a lot of fun redesigning their actions, but this too seems to be behind us. The only person I know who has trigger trouble at present is myself.

So the cycle turns and turns as, I suppose, in many things fashions change, centres of interest shift and alter. Shooters find new things to worry about. Possibly some of us are never really happy unless we have something to worry about, or something to fiddle with. A new gimmick was introduced at Grantown and this time I was on the receiving end of the stick. I am still wondering if there really is anything in it. In case you are interested you should now begin to worry about your headspace, over which only a few shooters have bothered to concern themselves. This is about to assume momentous importance in the maintenance of gilt-edged accuracy. However more of that anon. Bisley should show how true this is!

Wildfowling Clubs

The Wildfowlers' Association of Great Britain and Ireland: Hon. Secretary, Lt.-Commdr. J. W. Anderton, 19 Castle Street, Liverpool, 2.

The Pagham and West Sussex Wildfowlers' Association held their seventh A.G.M. on June 14. This was fairly well-attended at the White Horse Inn, Chichester. Donald Howe was in the chair and welcomed old and new members, and was elected chairman for the ensuing year.

In his report, the chairman stated that the association year 1957-58, though fairly quiet, had been one of steady progress with the Association striking amicable relations with the West Sussex River Board, the new owners of Pagham Harbour. The Association duck-rearing scheme was going ahead very well, and the first batch of young duck were ringed and released at Pagham that week, and more would follow in July.

With regard to the limited membership of the Association (150), we now have nine vacancies, but with the approach of the new season these will be filled quickly.

At the election of officers N. Sedgwick, B. Chaplin, F. Standfield, R. Dutton, J. C. M. Nichols, and E. Parish were elected vice-presidents. E. Philips was again elected hon. secretary, and P. Hawes vice-chairman.

The payment of affiliation fees to W.A.G.B.I. and B.F.S.S. for the year 1958-59 were approved by the meeting which closed with a short talk by "Tim" Sedgwick on how necessary it is to be properly affiliated to W.A.G.B.I. and what great benefits were derived therefrom. He also made it clear that it was an advantage both to W.A.G.B.I. and members, if each new member also became a member of the parent-body in his own right.

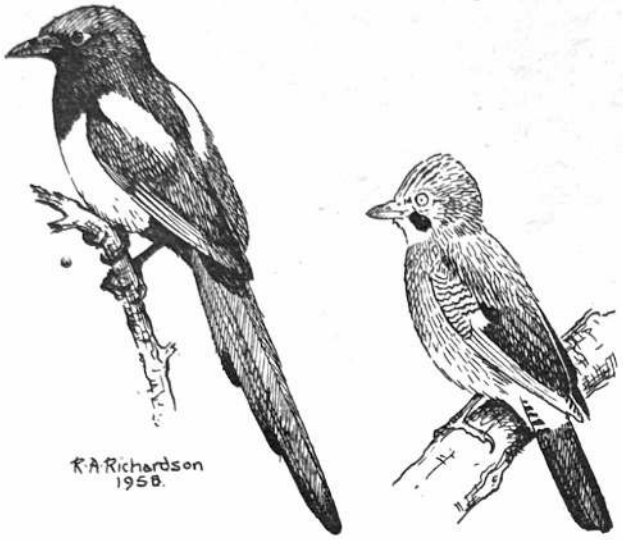
* * *

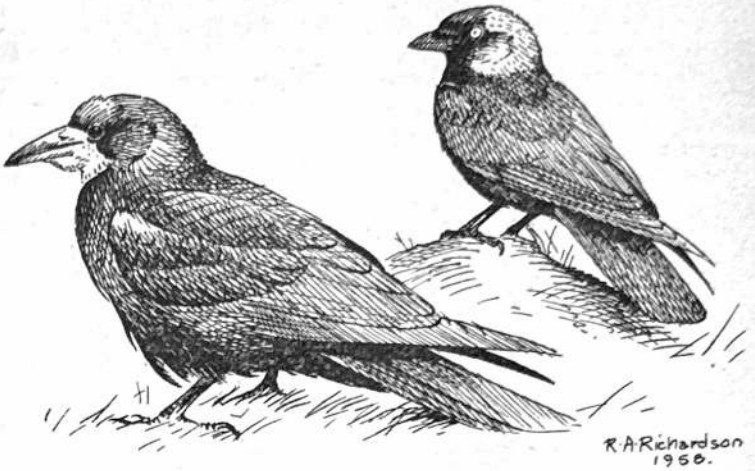
The Kent Wildfowlers' Association held a Clay Pigeon Competition on Saturday, June 21, and once again there was an excellent attendance, ad all enjoyed the first class organisation arranged by Mr. and Mrs. Ernie Pearce.

Forty-one members shot in the practice shoot and 38 in the competition which was won by Peter Butt with 10 out of 10. Second prize was won by Charlie Marten after a shoot-off with David Ashenden and D. Ward. Charlie Marten also shot 10 out of 10 in the shoot-off and D. Ward 9 out of 10 to take Third prize. Consolation prize was won by Mr. Banfield.

After the competition a further 30 members shot Down-the-line and went home having had a most enjoyable afternoon.

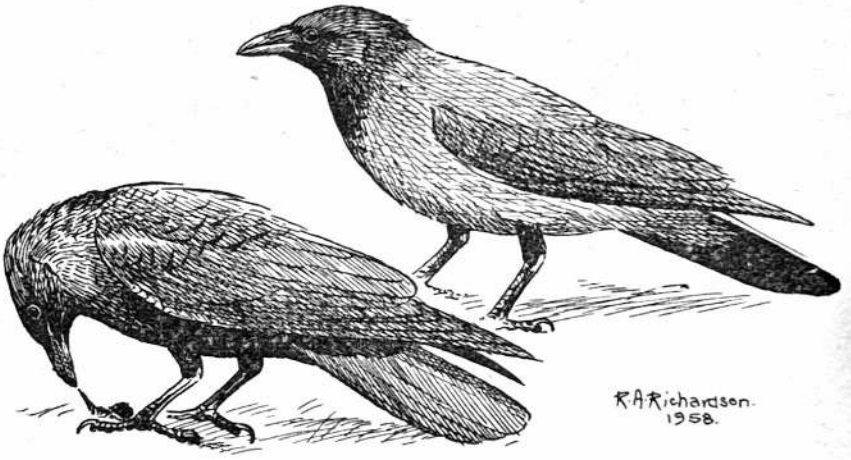
CORVINE PREDATORS





Above: JAY AND MAGPIE

The jay's white rump when the bird is in flight is as conspicuous as the pied plumage and long tail of the magpie. Neither species is protected. Both are locally numerous, and being omnivorous with a partiality for eggs and young birds, are no friends to the game preserver. Jays are very local in Ireland and West Scotland. Magpies are common in most parts of Ireland, Wales and England, but local on Scottish mainland, and rare western and northern isles. Both species gregarious outside breeding season.

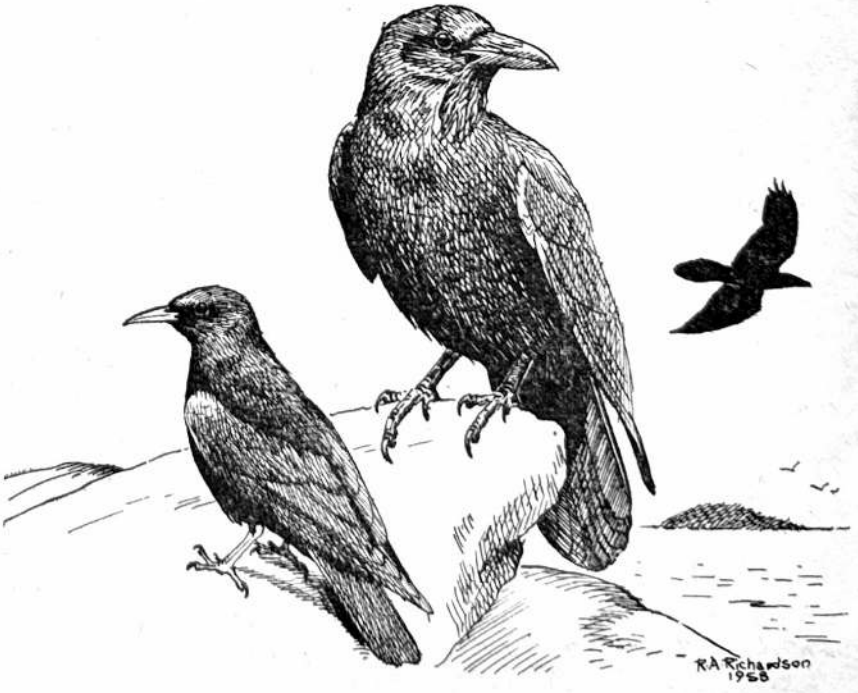


Top right: ROOK AND JACKDAW

Neither of these birds is protected by the 1954 Act. Adult rooks, but not immature birds, easily distinguished by bare whitish face-patch. Jackdaws easily recognised by small size and grey napes. Both species are common residents with numbers increased by large autumnal influx. As is well known, rooks mostly build in tall trees, jackdaws in holes of trees and buildings. Both species are omnivorous, fond of eggs, and their numbers must be kept within bounds in spring-time.

Centre right: HOODED CROW AND CARRION CROW

The grey mantle of hooded crow at once distinguishes it from the "carrion." The former is resident in Ireland, breeding in every county, and more locally in Scotland. In autumn many "hoodies" arrive on East Coast of England, but in winter they are much less plentiful in Kent and Sussex than in East Anglia. Carrion crow mostly found singly or in pairs, can easily be confused with immature rook. Common but rather local, England, Wales and Scotland, almost unknown in Ireland. Both species will eat anything and are particularly fond of eggs. They occasionally interbreed. Not protected.



Lower right: RAVEN AND CHOUGH

The raven is much larger than carrion crow, but size is not always a reliable distinction at a distance. The raven's very large, thick bill, and deep, husky barking note are characteristic, and so is its direct strong flight with steady wing-beats. Mostly found today in wild coastal areas, Cornwall, Wales, West Scotland and Ireland. Now protected. Possibly the shepherd has more reason to complain of ravens than the keeper. The red-billed chough, so distinctive in appearance, is strictly protected and comparatively harmless.

GUN GOSSIP

by Top Wad

THE importance of confidence to good shooting cannot be overestimated. It can even overcome to a large extent the disadvantages of an incorrectly fitting gun or an incorrect choice of cartridge. There are countless men shooting today are by no means particular about what gun or cartridges they use, but who manage to maintain a reasonable degree of accuracy which by their standards is very satisfactory, regardless of the fact that their stock is half an inch too short or their barrels plate badly with No. 5. (In passing it might be mentioned that the latter shot size never did pattern especially well from the majority of guns.) Given a properly fitting weapon and the cartridges that suited the gun, their shooting would undoubtedly improve out of all recognition, but while they have confidence in their present equipment, and their ability to use it, they will shoot better than the man who is more suitably armed, but who lacks faith in his gun and himself. Confidence, then, counts for a lot, but it is sometimes misplaced. Consider the question of choke.

Reasonable ranges

Nothing instils more confidence into the mind of the average rough shooter than a goodly degree of choke in each barrel of his double gun. He contends, quite rightly, that in his sort of shooting, comprising in the main walking-up and fowling, birds will be encountered at extreme ranges, calling for maximum pattern density as far as possible. Where he is inconsistent, however, is that in the next breath he will insist that the maximum range for sporting shooting is forty yards. If this were strictly true, there would never be any need for a tighter constriction of the barrel than a half choke in a 12-bore, and that in the ordinary 2½in. case. Far be it from me to condone long shots, but the fact remains that when we enter the realm of full chokes and 3in. cartridges to boot, the fifty and even fifty-five yard shot is not to be dismissed as either impracticable or unsporting, always providing—and the proviso is important—a load is used which gives sufficient pattern and penetration to hit and kill or bring down, and not merely to pepper the bird. A reminder of the importance of accurate range judgment and the preference of overestimation should here be unnecessary.

A full choke, which implies a barrel constriction of forty thousandths of an inch and 70 per cent of the pattern in the thirty inch circle at forty yards, can be an embarrassment even to the rough shooter and wildfowler. Two of my shooting companions have had their fully choked fowling pieces opened up in the right barrels since last season. Missed geese at thirty yards was the reason for the first decision and the second was taken after a series of shameful performances at pigeon coming in to decoys. And just to show once again the effect of confidence — or blissful ignorance — it must be added that in the first case the chosen reduction was to half choke, and the improved shooting of the altered gun's owner was most marked. For some time he was a staunch advocate of this boring, until a gunmaker colleague produced a gauge beyond reproach which just registered quarter choke in the right tube. As a result the gun has now gone away again—to a different gunsmith — for a reduction to threequarter choke in the left barrel.

It should be remembered that although British measurements of choke are obviously standard, guns can vary in the patterns that they throw, in spite of being bored with similar degrees of choke. The only sure way of determining the extent of choke required is first to make up one's mind as to the sort of shooting for which the weapon is wanted, and then to plate the gun carefully at different ranges with the sizes of shot it is intended to use. For the record, my own choice of boring is quarter choke right barrel and full choke left, from which Nos. 7, 6, 4 and 1 give good patterns and meet all eventualities.

DIFFERENT WAYS WITH TROUT

by PAMELA KAY

IS there anything more delicious than small fresh trout fried till crisp? Whether you dust them with flour prior to cooking or dip them in oatmeal in the Scots fashion, they are equally good. A little Maitre d'Hotel butter is an excellent garnish. But bigger fish are better baked or grilled.

Grilled trout. After cleaning the fish, wipe it dry and open it out flat. Carefully remove the backbone, then season the flesh. Place under the grill with the skin towards the heat and half cook. Turn the fish, baste with a little butter, and finish cooking with the flesh towards the fire.

Trout meunier. Roll the trout in flour, and fry in a little hot butter. When cooked, place the fish on the hot serving dish. Sprinkle them with lemon juice and a little parsley (chopped mushrooms and very thinly sliced aubergines may also be used). Put some more butter in the frying pan and cook until it turns slightly brown. Strain it over the fish and serve at once.

Another excellent recipe is to poach the trout in a "Court Bouillon" for approximately five minutes and then serve with melted butter.

Court Bouillon. Two pints water, 1 carrot, 1 small onion, 2 wine glasses full white wine, 1 bay leaf, parsley, thyme. Put the sliced vegetables and all the ingredients into a saucepan. Simmer for 45 minutes. Bring to the boil again before putting in the fish.

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GUNDOG NEWS

Conducted by P. R. A. MOXON, Beoley Kennels, Redditch, Worcs.

A FEW weeks ago, after my mention of sheepdogs, several readers expressed the hope that my interests would not undergo a change and that my articles would not be full of "sheepdog news." I cannot imagine ever forsaking gundogs for any of the other working breeds, for although I can appreciate any dog which does a useful job of work, uses its brains and earns its keep, one cannot help feeling that most other forms of dog work are more mechanical and repetitive.

The gundog is, most of the time, working under temptation, and is frequently expected to do for us the exact opposite to its natural instincts. For all this, I believe that we can learn from the sheepdog man or, for that matter, from anyone interested in any branch of dog training. After all, they, like we, are constantly seeking the best methods of training and have to study the psychological aspect of their dogs.

I make no apologies, therefore, for referring to a visit which I recently received from a very enthusiastic and talented amateur sheepdog handler. He was as interested in watching me handling spaniels and retrievers as I was to see him with his sheepdog, and in discussion we discovered that we have many problems in common, and that we can learn from each other to a certain degree.

It was interesting to learn, for instance, that sheep (usually considered such silly animals) become used to a particular dog, but may behave very differently once they realised that they have a different animal being worked upon them. This is something I did not know, but I am not surprised, for I have noticed exactly the same thing with rabbits! My friend found, as readers will, that this is a large pill to swallow, but it is perfectly true. Any rabbit kept in a pen and used for some time to train gundogs will, with experience, learn just what sort of dog is dealing with them, and react accordingly. Our old Arabella, a wild-tame crossbred blue doe (which, incidentally, is now seven years old and was reared on a fountain pen filler by my small daughters) will weigh up a dog within seconds of it entering the pen. If it is a dog she knows to be steady, she will go on feeding unconcernedly, perhaps hopping away a few feet as a precaution. On the other hand, the moment a strange dog or an enthusiastic puppy is taken into the pen, she will dart to what she considers to be a safe distance, and though she may continue to feed, she will keep a weather eye upon the pupil.

Filming Good Friday

In the recent television film which was taken here, the commentator, Mr. Macdonald Hastings, mentioned that the rabbits do not appear to run very fast or very far when flushed by a dog. For this film we concentrated upon one rabbit—a black buck known as Good Friday which the camermen thought most photogenic!—and he, like Arabella, although considerably younger, knows his stuff and just how much distance to put between himself and the dog. For the film I was, naturally, using a bitch I could trust, and Candy and Good Friday are old friends (or enemies, whichever you like). Indeed, Candy has got to that stage of training (as do so many good ones) where she is not nearly so interested in tame rabbits as wild ones, or even tame ones with wild blood in them. Whether this is because of their different action, or whether the scent is different I know not, but the fact remains that there is a distinct difference.

It has long been realised by trainers that, as most animals learn by the association of ideas, it is not unusual for a dog to associate certain behaviour with the surroundings that it is in at the time. Hence it is always advisable to have more than one training pen, for a dog can be got perfectly steady in one pen but may react very differently when expected to perform the same functions in a different place. For example, if you teach your dog to sit to command at the same place every day, you imagine that you are teaching it to obey the command.

However, you may well find that this is not the case, but that it is associating the particular spot with sitting Indeed, such a dog will, after a lesson or two, probably sit automatically when it comes to that particular spot, without any command being given. Throughout training it is necessary to "ring the changes" as often as possible, so that there is no danger of your dog associating certain geography with certain actions.

If one appreciates these facts, it is not difficult to realise that not only will a dog get to know certain sheep (or rabbits) and certain fields, but that the reverse is also true. It does not matter how well our dogs go at home, on ground that they know—we are bound to suffer disappointments at first when we take them elsewhere. Trainers are constantly being reminded of this when they visit each other, and find that their paragons are much more likely to riot on strange ground (even in a strange rabbit pen) than they would be at home.

Sheepdog Training

The sheepdog trainer has other problems similar to those of the gundog man. For instance, in the excitement of the moment and because it is working different sheep on strange ground, a sheepdog may riot or refuse to obey a command. At home or at any time other than in a trial the shepherd could do something about this, and correct his dog or at least show it where it has gone wrong. In publis this is wellnigh impossible, and the training deteriorates to a certain degree. The dog has won—has bested its handler once—and the odds are that it will try it on again.

Field trial handlers know only too well the frustration created by a dog which runs in or chases during the trial. They realise that they can do little or nothing to correct the fault at the time in the exact place where it was committed, and that weeks or perhaps months of work may be neccessary to get things right again. Once a dog has had its own way and gone unchecked or unrebuked, it is likely to occur again, and training has taken a backward step. This is why, when training a dog, you do all you can to teach it right before it has an opportunity of learning the delights of riot, and if it does misbehave you do all you can to correct it immediately and in the exact spot where the crime was committed. Thus you show the dog in the plainest possible way where it has erred and that "crime does not pay"

A Matter of Comparison

The sheepdog trainer has certain advantages over the gundog trainer, the chief one being that he can conduct most of his training in such a manner that circumstances likely to be encountered under natural conditions can be artificially simulated. He can position his sheep and his hurdles more or less where he likes, ring the changes as regards ground and sheep, and repeat a particular phase of training again and again. He also has the advantage that his dog is not working under such terrific temptation as is a gundog being worked on natural game, nor is he thwarting the natural instincts of his pupil to the same degree as is the gundog trainer. He can take his dog among sheep day after day, several times a day if he chooses, whereas the average gundog trainer only has access to game during the season, and has to improvise for half the year.

My friend gave me some sound advice—just such advice as I am always passing on to others. I have apparently made the same mistake over by sheepdog puppy as so many beginners (and not a few old hands) make with their gundogs. As I am only learning, I bought a cheap puppy of unpedigree farm stock locally. I am assured that most likely I am wasting my time, and I quite expect that I am. The lesson is that with dogs—or with anything else for that matter—it pays to buy the best possible material to start with. The inexperienced beginner needs an even better animal than does the old hand, because a good natural worker will be easier to train and handle.

The fallacy that "I'm only a beginner so a cheap article will do for a start" is quickly exploded, and we soon learn that the best is the cheapest in the long run. I have found throughout life—and it matters not whether

Using an older dog to encourage a puppy to face cover.

you are dealing with a car, a typewriter, musical instrument or dog—that as I learn more I become dissatisfied with an inferior article, and yearn for the best possible, even if I cannot afford it. Cheap clothing and footwear (bought "for work") prove the most expensive in the long run, as I quickly discovered when I started training dogs professionally. If ever a job was hard on clothes, this one is!

One point which came out in conversation with my farmer friend applies with great force to gundogs as well as sheepdogs, and is one which I cannot remember having discussed in my articles. This concerns working two dogs—perhaps a young one with an old one—and the harm that you may do to both in the process. For example, an experienced and keen spaniel, if worked with another, is very liable to be distracted and to "keep half an eye" on its bracemate to see if it is finding game, and to react jealously if it does. There is also always the danger of one dog being content to allow the other to do all the hard work. Work two spaniels together and note how often one will be pushing through the cover whilst the other is prancing about outside in anticipation of something being flushed.

This does not mean that one should never use another dog as an example to teach certain things—or to create jealously in order to encourage a puppy to retrieve or face cover, for instance—but rather it indicates the possible dangers of the indiscriminate working of two dogs at the same time. If you are training for definite brace work well and good, but make certain that you do *train* for it. How often am I asked "What shall I do to keep my dog steady—all the other guns in my syndicate have dogs which run in?"

A dog (like a child) acquires bad habits much more easily than good ones, probably because it always seems more enjoyable to do wrong than to do right! Personally, I loathe shooting over more than one dog—especially over a "brace" of spaniels which have not been *trained* as a brace—you need eyes at the back of your head.

Round Our Way—XV

by Walter McIntire

MOST people round our way who go on the marsh find their way into Todd's some time or another after they've been shooting and quite often before. In fact I've known a few who have forgotten all about going shooting and stayed in Todd's until closing time and had to think up some tale of why they didn't shoot any duck of whatever it was they were intending to shoot.

Todd's, of course, is the Black Prince at the bottom of the lane leading to the marsh and there used to be a sign outside with this name on it which you could have read if it was repainted. Years ago you could see a picture of a fellow in fancy dress above the name but nobody thought much about him. In fact I can remember Old Park, when he was still shooting, saying the bloke in the picture didn't look much like a wildfowler and he couldn't think what right he had to be staring across the marsh as though he owned it.

About a month ago, when The Bishop and a few of us were in there, Todd went down to tap a fresh barrel and when he came back he said, "I hope this take-over doesn't change the beer," and the Bishop pricked up his ears and asked what he meant.

It seemed the brewery had bought out another one which has a few houses in town as well as round our way and the whole thing was being streamlined.

Alf Park said that so long as they didn't let the stream get into the beer he wouldn't worry and we generally felt it wasn't anything likely to concern us.

That was that until the next week, when Todd said he'd had a letter saying they were renaming the pub. There were only a few of us there at the time but we started in on Todd with 'why?' and 'who says they've got to?' and 'what do they intend to call it?' Poor Old Todd was upset just because we were. He said it wasn't *his* idea but the managing director had just written to say it would be The Rodney in future and all the formalities for licensing and so on would be looked after.

It just wasn't on and we all got a bit worked up about it. We're as proud of the navy as anyone and nobody can say we object to progress if its the right sort. In fact there are a dozen television sets in the village and some of the youngsters even run a skiffle group but to change the name of our pub to a battleship was a bit much. Todd said it was because the brewery wanted to have all its pubs, old and new, named after ships, some of them already being so named.

Well, to us it wasn't good enough and in the next few days we got a lot of support from chaps in the village so that the Bishop put up a letter to the brewery "for their sympathetic consideration," giving local opinions and so on. I will say this for the brewery that they sent a fellow out specially to see the Bishop and explain their policy, but they didn't seem likely to give way.

Members Up in Arms

By now most of our club members were up in arms about the change, even those who only came in Todd's once in a Preston Guild, and we regulars were very unhappy because the brewery were always very sporting—sending a bottle of whisky for club raffles and letting us have the use of a room for meetings up at the Ramillies, the pub in the village. And of course the beer was good and Todd was like a father to the lads.

There was one fellow in the Club, a big Irishman with black hair and a beard who sometimes came into Todd's with a white poodle. You may not believe it, but that poodle retrieved anything except geese. It belonged to his wife and he said he'd told her when they married that he wouldn't have the thing around if it couldn't earn its keep. He called it an Irish Water Spaniel gone far in depravity! He was a bit of a character and about this time he showed up in Todd's and asked what all the fuss was about.

"Bedam!" he said when we told him. "I didn't know the place had any name but Todd's." Then he said, "Wait now, my great-grandfather served in a ship called the Black Prince." So Todd looked up an Encyclopaedia and we found the first cruiser of that name was built about 300 years ago. He phoned the brewery about it the next morning and eventually they agreed to let the name stand.

It seemed likely they might decide to put up a new warship sign so we got hold of Tom Curle, one of our members who's also the local signwriter and he made a sign which the Club presented to the brewery "in appreciation of their respect for local opinions."

It hangs outside Todd's where it is much admired and it shows a man in fancy dress gazing over the marsh with an oldfashioned cruiser in the background. The man has a white poodle on his knee and looks very much like the big Irishman.

Progress is all right if there's a reason for it and I'm glad to say the beer at Todd's hasn't changed at all.

IS THE GARDEN GUILTY?

by Taproot

SOMETHING this week about vegetable prices. At the height of the potato shortage and before the English early crop was ready. Dutch-imported new potatoes were making 48s. cwt. on the open market. Encouraged by this figure some English growers put the spinner into immature crops. Immediately the price fell by 8s. cwt. removing that narrow margin of profit which is all the horticulturist can hope for at the present time. Lifting over here abruptly stopped, prices hardened again, and I am glad to hear this morning (June 23) that English produce has now got its foot in the door at the more satisfactory level of 52s.

Meanwhile that harbinger of the summer vegetable crop, the broad bean, was first quoted at Covent Garden during the week ending June 14 at 1s. a pound. This figure only referred to a minute trickle of forced stuff and it was not until the following week that the first supplies of earlies grown on a market-garden scale were available. At once the wholesale price fell to 10s. a bushel or just over 4d. a lb., although the housewife was asked to pay anything from 9d. to 1s. 2d. My small crop of about a quarter of an acre was well forward but light and the pods were all more or less ready together. We stripped the lot in one afternoon and I sold my 25 bushels for £12 10s. The seed had cost nearly £5. On top of that there had been manuring with F.Y.M., sowing and picking. I did not get fat out of *that*.

For the past few years the vegetable trade has bristled with this kind of anomaly and many farmers are in favour of establishing a vegetable marketing board on the lines of the organisation that has so successfully rationalised the sale of milk. At the core of the problem is the hierarchy of Covent Garden. If you read the weekly market reports published in the farming press you will see that London prices tend lower than those concurrent at Birmingham, Bristol, Cardiff, Leeds, Liverpool, Manchester and Newcastle-on-Tyne. London, is of course, the nearest city market to Kent, "the garden of England," and is also within easy rail distance of the great potato-growing districts of the Fens. On the other hand, the costs of collection and distribution in the heart of the largest city in the world must be exceedingly high.

Whether Covent Garden does constitute a "ring" or pressure group that exercises a price-fixing mechanism for its own benefit and nobody else's, is difficult to say. Wholesalers work by taking a small percentage of profit on the vast quantity of goods they handle as middle-men and I cannot clearly see their interest in rigging the market at any particular level. While many growers think them the nigger in the woodpile I am inclined to attribute the present low prices to other causes.

Today the grower of fresh vegetables has two rivals in foreign imports and the splinter group of his own calling who supply the raw material for frozen and other pre-packed goods. Under cover of the wide variety of choice offered to the housewife—wider even than in pre-war days—the retailer is steadily raising his margin of gross profit. In many instances he is charging the public three and four times what he has paid the grower. I know all about this at first hand because I have for many years supplied a round of greengrocers in a market town and I find myself powerless to make any effective protest even though no middleman is concerned.

Clay Pigeon Shooting

(The C.P.S. Fixture List is on page 554)

Reports and Results

55th Annual English Open Down-the-Line Championships

1st Day—Dougall Memorial Event: 1st E. Fear, 197/200, Dougall Memorial Trophy; 2nd A. Heald, 192, Gale Memorial Cup.

Class A: 1, W. G. A. Middleton, 191, Laries' Cup; 2, W. Heald, 189; 3, J. Wheater, 189; 4, D. Cordingley, 189; 5, G. A. Morin, 188; 6, R. Wilkinson, 187. Class B: 1, A. Pratt, 188; 2, G. Poskitt, 186; 3, F. J. Sherlock, 183; 4, C. Wilson, 183; 5, D. Clay, 182; 6, V. B. Huthart, 181, E. C. Ledger, R. Walker, 181.

Class C: 1, O. Hart, 177, Redhead Bowl; 2, P. Wilkinson, 174; 3, J. Edgar, 172; 4, D. Kippax, 171.

Class D: 1, J. R. Kidwill, 162; 2, K. Taylor, 154; 3, A. T. Sharp, 134.

Gunmakers' Cup: Harrogate Gun Club, 377/400 (E. Fear & A. Poskitt).

Dewar Shield: Leicester & District Gun Club, 934/1000 (A. Pratt, M. L. Freeman, W. G. A. Middleton, R. Townroe, J. Wheater).

2nd Day—English Open Championship: 1, M. L. Freeman, 195, Championship Cup; 2, J. W. Cowen, 195, Jhalawar Cup.

Class A: 1, E. Fear, 194; 2, J. Wheater, 194; 3, R. E. Dutton, 192; 4, W. Heald, 191; 5, G. Jones, 190; 6, A. Pratt, 190; 7, T. E. Sannders, 190.

Class B: 1, T. S. Brockie, 192, Referee Cup; 2, B. Bailey, 191; 3, V. B. Huthart, 188; 4, J. Y. Stewart, 187; 5, W. L. Harris, 187; 6, H. B. Smith, 186; 7, J. Peters, 184; 8, D. T. Jones, 184; 9, S. C. Miles, 184; J. W. Wright, 184.

Class C: T. C. Blanchard, 193; 2, P. Wilkinson, 182; 3, A. Albrighton, 181; 4, J. A. Haynes, 181; 5, D. B. Hare, 179; 6, D. Kippax, 177; 7, N. Minta, J. Edgar, equal, 176.

Class D: 1, K. Taylor Jnr., 171; 2, D. C. Partridge, 168; 3, H. Hodson, 164.

Veterans' Cup: 1, S. C. Miles, 94 points ex 100.

Colts D.T.L. Championship: 1, P. Wilkinson, 94 points ex 100; 2, J. Y. Stewart.

All Counties D.T.L. Championship: 1, J. W. Cowen (North of England Championship) 195.

North v. South of England: 1, North 3,700; 2, South 3,655.

International Shield: England 946 (T. S. Bamber, E. Fear, W. Heald, J. Wheater, W. G. A. Middleton).

High Gun of the Meeting: 1, E. Fear, 391; 2, J. Wheater, 383.

Ladies' Prize: Mrs. Jill Partridge.

* * *

Wetherby and District Gun Club's third shoot of the season was held at Deighton Banks on Saturday, June 14 by kind permission of Mr. J. A. T. Marshall. The events at this stage of the Club's activities are primarily concerned with the Club Championship, namely the Silver Pheasant shot from scratch and the Ezart Trophy shot on handicap. These are decided by shooting concurrently with events 3, 4 and 5 of the programme. Mr. R. Wilkinson, Helperby, was back to his good form, shooting magnificently, and won both these events with J. W. M. Jackson a close runner up. Mr. Wilkinson was also High Gun of the meeting taking the Davey Cup and silver spoon. Possibles were scored during the afternoon by J. Oxley, P. Wetton, and R. Wilkinson. Weather conditions were ideal making a very enjoyable afternoon's shooting for the twenty six guns present and a good number of spectators.

Results: Ten Bird Trial handicap: 1, J. P. Brecon (Elvington); 2, P. Wetton (Clitheroe); 3, R. Wilkinson (Helperby).

Modified Skeet handicap: 1, P. Wetton; 2, J. C. H. Hawking (Givendale); 3, J. K. Jaques (Stanley, Wakefield).

Down-the-Line A.B.C. handicap: A, J. Oxley (Rawdon); B, R. Wilkinson; C, P. Wetton.

Skeet 20 birds A.B.C. handicap: A, H. A. Simpson (Seamer); B. G. L. Ezart (Wetherby); C. P. Wetton.

Five Doubles A.B.C. handicap: A, J. Oxley (Rawdon); B, R. Wilkinson; C, J. M. Webster (Kexby).

Silver Tankard ten pairs scratch: 1, J. P. Brecon; 2, J. W. M. Jackson; 3, J. K. Jaques

* * *

Reigate and District Clay Pigeon Shooting Club's Annual Open was favoured by the hottest day of the year which helped the 31 guns to enjoy the shoot.

From Bisley the Club welcomed J. A. Baigent who shot very well indeed to win three events. He also won the day's High Gun award, and close behind him was the Club's chairman, Derek Partridge. The Novice event was won by Cecil Read after a tie with Geoff Sutton and the Skeet produced two excellent scores in B and C class respectively; Harold Bishop (welcome back!) with 35, and a new committee member, Jack Stapley, with 32. The Club registered strong disapproval of the excellent performance put up in the Driven Grouse by the treasurer, Tug Wilson—Club profits cannot stand so many broken clays!

20 Driven Grouse. A: 1, D. C. Partridge, 18; 2, H. Bishop, 17; 3, J. A. Baigent, 16. B: 1, R. E. Wilson, 17; 2, P. Hovenden, 16; 3, P. Marsh, 15.

Swannack Cup: 1; J. A. Baigent, 20; 2, P. Marsh, 18; 3 (tied), G. H. Read and J. R. Ward, 16.

Novice Spoon: C. Read after a tie with G. Sutton.

Ladies' and Colts' Cup: Mrs. D. C. Partridge.

50 D.T.L. A: 1, J. A. Baigent, 98; 2, D. C. Partridge, 86; 3, H. T. Read, 79. B: 1, K. Jeffreys, 84; 2, S. Lambert, 76; 3 (after a shoot off), H. Bishop.

40 Skeet. A: 1, J. A. Baigent, 35; 2, B. H. Caesar, 34; 3, D. C. Partridge, 33. B: 1, H. Bishop, 35; 2, T. Green, 22; 3, S. Lambert, 21. C: 1, J. W. Stapley, 32; 2, P. Hovenden, 25; 3, G. Sutton, 23.

10 Double Rise: 1, D. C. Partridge, 22; 2, H. Bishop, 13; 3 (after a shoot off), S. Lambert, 13.

High Gun: J. A. Baigent, 149/160; Runner-up, D. C. Partridge, 137.

The Club would like to start the next open shoot at 10.30 a.m. on Sunday, July 13, so competitors please come on time. As well as the usual events, there will be Driven Grouse, 40 Skeet and 50 Down-the-Line. All shooters, their families and spectators are always welcome; details from G. H. Read, c/o 90 London Road, Redhill (2921).

* * *

The **West Sussex Gun Club** held the South East of England Skeet Championship over 60 birds at Goodwood on Saturday, June 21st.

There was a good muster of guns and competition was keen for the Silver Challenge Cup presented to the Club by F. R. Readhead. The Chairman thanked him for his generosity and invited him to present the cup and prizes to the winners.

High Gun, R. E. Dutton, 58 x 60.

Class A: 1, C. H. Gardiner, 57 x 60; 2, C. E. Shrubb, 56 x 60; 3, F. Pocock, 55 x 60.

Class B: 1, H. Brunt, 56 x 60; 2, J. Whidbourne, 53 x 60; 3, C. Thorne, 51 x 60.

Class C: 1, R. J. Lunnen, 32 x 40; 2, G. Moss, 26 x 40.

Class D: 1, F. E. Davis, 30 x 40; 2, R. Carnegie, 26 x 40; 3, E. Steer, 22 x 40.

I.C.I. Shield and Medal, R. E. Dutton.

I.C.I. Novice Cup, P. H. Bedford, 20 x 40.

* * *

Blackpool Gun Club held a 100 bird event on May 27. For a change it was a lovely day, but an awkward side wind made shooting a little tricky.

Class A: 1, J. R. Braithwaite, 98/193 pts.; 2, F. Sherlock, 97/189; 3, W. Heald, 96/188; 4, G. Jones, 96/188.

Class B: 1, A. Heald, 88/178 pts.; 2, A. Jones, 94/176; 3, L. Carter, 91/171.

Round of Skeet: T. E. Sanders, 19; G. Jones, W. Heald and again G. Jones with 18 each.

The Lancashire Down-the-Line Championship over 50 birds took place on May 31.

W. Heald again took the lead with 95 ex 100 points; R. Love, 91; T. S. Bamber, 90.

A further 50 bird event. Class A: W. Heald 96 ex 100; R. Love, 96 ex 100; F. Sherlock, 94 ex 100; W. Blamire 93 ex 100.

Class B: A. Heald 91 ex 100; O. Hart, 83; D. Kippax, 81.

Medal and Shield, W. Heald. Novice tankard, H. Higham, 72/100.

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS — *continued from page 568*

BOOKS

AMERICAN PUBLICATIONS. "Smith & Wesson Revolvers," 46/6; "Gun Collectors Handbooks of Values," 69/-; "Gun Digest," 24/9. Complete catalogue free.—Willen Ltd. (Dept. W.), 9 Drapers Gardens, London, E.C.2.

BOOKS ON SHOOTING by Noel Sedgwick: "With Gun on Saltings and Stubble," 16/8; "A Shooting Man's Year," 16/8; "Wildfowling and Rough Shooting," 16/8; "With Dog and Gun," 19/8; "Shooting Round the Year," 19/8; "Shooting Wildfowl and Game," 10/5. These prices include postage. Order from The Burlington Publishing Company, 29 Old Bond Street, London, W.1.

FIELD & STREAM, America's leading monthly. Year's subscription 32/-, specimen 3/6.—Hobson, 344 Topsham Road, Exeter.

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"GREENWAY" Old English Flavour Wines. Dandelion, Cowslip, Elderberry, Parsnip. High quality, 6/6 per bottle. Carriage paid on orders of dozen.—Wheeler & Green, 110 Commercial Road, Totton, near Southampton, Hants.

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THE NATURE CONSERVANCY
CONFIRMATION OF BYELAWS

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Nature Conservancy intend after the expiry of the period mentioned below to apply to the Secretary of State for confirmation of Byelaws made by the Nature Conservancy in respect of Bridgwater Bay Nature Reserve.

Copies of the Byelaws will be kept at the office of the Nature Conservancy at London, the office of the Somerset County Council at Taunton, the office of the Rural District Council of Bridgwater at Bridgwater, and the office of the Rural District Council of Williton at Williton, and will be open to inspection without payment on any weekday during the usual office hours for one calendar month from and after the date of the publication of this notice. Copies of the Byelaws will also be supplied on receipt of an application accompanied by a fee of one shilling for each copy.

Any objection to the confirmation of the Byelaws may be made by letter addressed to the Under-Secretary of State, Home Office, Whitehall, London, S.W.1, before the Byelaws are confirmed.

(signed) E. M. NICHOLSON,
Director-General
The Nature Conservancy.

24th June, 1958.
19 Belgrave Square,
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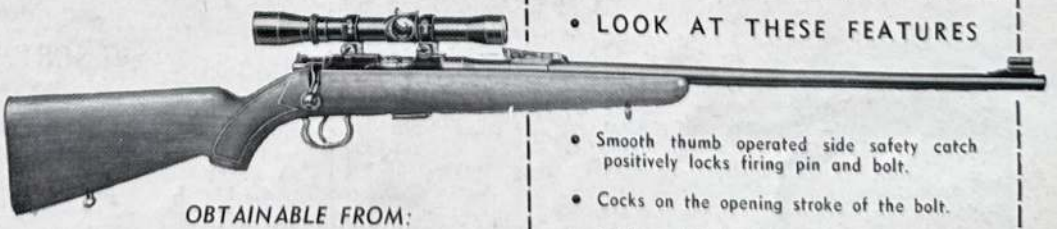

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